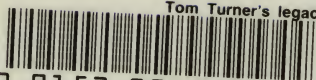


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Tom drew out a handkerchief from his pocket, and in so doing a note dropped upon the ground. Clarence stooped swiftly and picked it up.

TOM TURNER'S LEGACY

THE STORY OF HOW HE SECURED IT

BY HORATIO ALGER, JR.

Author of "Joe's Luck," "Tom the Bootblack," "The Errand Boy," "Dan the Newsboy," etc., etc.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY J. WATSON DAVIS

A. L. BURT COMPANY, PUBLISHERS,
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TOM TURNER'S LEGACY.

By HORATIO ALGER, JR.

7/25/67

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TOM TURNER'S LEGACY.

CHAPTER I.

TOM TURNER'S MISHAP.

"I WISH I hadn't played ball this afternoon," soliloquized Tom Turner, as he eyed ruefully a large rent in the knee of his only pair of trousers. "It isn't as if I had half a dozen suits like Clarence Kent. His father would buy him a new pair every month if he wanted them, while I think myself lucky to get a pair once a year."

This was the way it happened. The ball had been batted over the fence by Alfred Hudson, who was a powerful batter, and a cry went up "Lost ball!" The game was suspended while Tom Turner, who was one of the fielders, jumped over the fence and recovered it. Tom was a good gymnast, and undertook to vault the fence on his return. How it came about he could not explain, but he failed to accomplish the feat satisfactorily, and managed to tear an ugly rent in the knee of

his pantaloons. He bruised the knee itself a little also, but this he did not mind so much. The injury to his clothing, however, made him look sober, and he was not at all disposed to join in the laugh that went up from his fellow players, as they noticed his mishap.

Among the loudest laughers was Clarence Kent, a boy a month older than Tom, but in his dress and appearance forming a decided contrast to our hero. Tom was strongly made, with a frank, intelligent expression, and an open, attractive face. Had Clarence been a poor boy, or the son of a man of average circumstances, he would have been more popular. But he was the son of quite the richest man in Hillsboro, and he was entirely conscious of the fact. He was willing to play ball and keep company with his poorer neighbors, as otherwise he would have had a solitary time of it, but he wished to be treated with the deference which he considered due to his superior social position. Though he was dimly conscious that Tom was a greater favorite than himself, he considered him far beneath him on account of his poverty. There are many boys who would have sympathized with Tom in his straitened circumstances, but Clarence was an egotist and thought only of Number One.

"Now you've gone and done it, Tom Turner," he said, as he saw Tom ruefully examining the rent. "I suppose those are your only trousers."

"If they are it doesn't concern any one except myself," retorted Tom indignantly, for he felt sensitive at having his poverty publicly commented on.

"It's too bad, Tom," said Alfred Hudson sympathetically. "And it's my fault too, for batting the ball over the fence."

"That's all right, Alfred. I guess I can have them mended. Come, let us go on with the game!"

Tom wished to draw away attention from his misfortune, and so proposed continuing the game, though he would rather have gone home.

"I say, Tom," said Clarence. "You might dress in Scotch style with bare knees."

"Thank you," said Tom stiffly. "If you will set the example I may follow it."

"I? Oh, I've got plenty of trousers, one for every day in the week," retorted Clarence, boastfully.

"I'm glad you're so well of," said Tom briefly.

Soon afterwards he skilfully caught a fly ball, and so brought in his side. He felt the more satisfaction in this, because Clarence was at the bat.

When the game was over Tom made his way home. He and his mother lived in a small, story and a half house rather out of the village. It belonged to Mrs. Turner, but there was a mortgage on it of five hundred dollars, representing probably half its value, and this mortgage was held by Squire Kent, as Clarence's father was generally called. Tom's father had been killed in a railroad accident when Tom was ten years old. He was a carpenter, and had built the house himself. Had he lived two or three years longer, he would have been able to pay off the mortgage, but his sudden death brought embarrassment as well as grief to his widow and child.

Thus far Mrs. Turner had been able to retain the house, having been assisted by a small legacy from an aunt, but this was now exhausted, and they were slowly falling behind. In a town like Hillsboro, neither she nor Tom was able to earn much, and economically as they lived they found it hard to make both ends meet. Tom understood this very well, and he was very puzzled as he wended his way homeward to know where he was to get another pair of trousers. There was absolutely no money for extras in their small household.

Finally an idea came to him. There was a tail-

or in the village, Mr. Diamond, and it occurred to Tom that perhaps he might get him to make him a pair of trousers, and pay for them in work. Accordingly he dropped into the shop, where the tailor was busily engaged in pressing a suit.

“ Good afternoon, Mr. Diamond,” said Tom.

“ Good afternoon, Tom. Have you come in to order a suit ? ”

“ I should like to do it, but I am afraid you would have to wait a long time for your pay.”

“ You wouldn't be the only customer that makes me wait.”

“ No, I suppose not. What do you charge for trousers, Mr. Diamond ? ”

“ I can make you a pair as low as four dollars—good goods too ! ”

“ I need a new pair very much, but I have no money. Would you be willing to trust me for a pair, and let me pay in work ? ”

“ I would, Tom, if I had any work to do, but I have none that my own boys can't do.”

“ Then I am afraid I can't order any,” said Tom soberly.

“ I'd like to oblige you, Tom, for you are a good boy, but I am a poor man myself, and I have my family to provide for. What has happened to the pair you have on ? ”

"They were torn at the base-ball game, Mr. Diamond."

"Yes, it is a bad tear."

"Can they be mended so as to look decent?" asked Tom anxiously.

"Yes, but it needs a tailor to do it. Bring them round to-morrow, and I will do it myself."

"How much will it cost?" asked Tom.

"I will charge you nothing, for you are a good boy, and have very little money."

"You are very kind, Mr. Diamond, but I have no other pair, and shall have to wait while they are being mended."

"All right! Come round to-morrow after school. I will make them look as if they had never been torn."

Somewhat cheered, Tom went home. His mother was setting the table for supper. As Tom entered her attention was drawn to the condition of his clothing.

"Oh, Tom, how did you do it?" she asked with concern.

Tom explained briefly.

"I am afraid I can't mend them very well. And they are your only pair!" said Mrs. Turner, regretfully.

“ Mr. Diamond has agreed to repair them, and charge me nothing.”

“ He is very kind,” said Mrs. Turner gratefully. “ Such a rent as that requires a tailor’s skill. You need a new pair of trousers badly, Tom.”

“ Yes, mother, I know it.”

“ And we are so miserably poor.”

“ It won’t be so always,” said Tom, speaking more cheerfully than he felt. “ Some time I shall be able to earn fair wages, and then we will both be better off.”

They had scarcely finished supper when the door bell rang.

Tom went to the door. On the step stood a boy employed by Alfred Hudson’s father. He held in his hand a package wrapped in brown paper.

“ This is for you,” he said, “ and here is a letter from Alfred.”

Tom opened the letter and read as follows :

“DEAR TOM:—I hope you won’t be offended. I have taken the liberty of sending you a pair of my trousers. I think they will fit you, for we are of about the same size. Don’t mind taking them, for, though I am not as well provided as Clarence, I have enough left. Your friend,

“ALFRED HUDSON.”

Opening the bundle, Tom was moved to find that Alfred had sent him his best trousers.

“He is a friend worth having!” said Tom to himself. “I always liked Alfred and now I like him better than ever.”

CHAPTER II.

AN IMPORTANT TELEGRAM.

THE next morning Tom put on the trousers which had been so generously given him. On the way to school he left the torn pair at the tailor's. As he approached the schoolhouse Clarence was waiting for his appearance, with the amiable intention of teasing him about the rent. When he saw the new trousers he felt surprised and disappointed. But he could not forego the opportunity of guying Tom.

"Where did you borrow those trousers?" he asked.

"I didn't borrow them at all."

"I never saw you wear them before."

"You seem very much interested in my clothes, Clarence," said Tom. "I don't trouble myself about yours."

"I thought of sending you round an old pair."

"If you send them in kindness I will accept them."

This was not the answer that Clarence expected, and he unwillingly desisted, finding his attempt to annoy Tom unsuccessful.

He passed into the schoolhouse just as Alfred Hudson appeared.

"Alfred," said Tom warmly, "I want to thank you for your kindness. You see I am making use of your kind gift. But I am afraid you sent me your best pair. An old one would have done."

"It's all right, Tom ! I am to have a new pair next week. Any way, when I make a present I want it to be a good one."

Fortunately for Tom, Clarence did not learn where he obtained the addition to his wardrobe, or it would have afforded him a new and unexpected theme for gibes.

When school closed Tom had occasion to pass the hotel on his way home, when the landlord's son came out and accosted him.

"There's a telegram for your mother inside, Tom," he said. "If you will take it, it will save sending round to your house."

"A telegram for mother !" repeated Tom, puzzled. "What can it be ?"

"You'll have to open it to find out. It is from Scranton."



Tom felt at liberty to open the telegram, as an immediate answer might be required.--Page 13.

Tom Turner's Legacy.

"Then it must be about Uncle Brinton. He may be dead."

"He's rich, isn't he?"

"I have always heard so."

"I hope your mother will come in for some money."

"I hope so, too," said Tom earnestly.

He felt at liberty to open the telegram, as an immediate answer might be required. This was what he read.

"Brinton Pendergast is dead. Funeral at one o'clock on Thursday.

"CHARLES BENSON."

"Funeral Thursday! And it is Wednesday already!" murmured Tom. "I wonder whether mother will go."

He lost no time in getting home. As he entered the house with the telegram in his hand his mother asked: "What have you there, Tom?"

"A telegram, mother. It is for you, but I opened it. Uncle Brinton is dead. The funeral is to-morrow."

"Poor old man! So he is gone at last! I ought not to be surprised, for he was very old."

"How old, mother?"

"Let me see! He was two years older than

mother. That will make him seventy-nine last August."

"What an old man!" ejaculated Tom, who at the age of fifteen looked upon seventy-nine as a man in middle life would look upon two hundred.

"I suppose if I were to live till seventy-nine," said Mrs. Turner, "you would look upon me as a very old woman."

"You will never seem old to me, mother. Did Uncle Brinton never marry?"

"No: he was disappointed when a young man. The girl to whom he was engaged married another, and this wholly changed Uncle Brinton. He grew sour in disposition, and after a while become a recluse and a miser. The poor man had very small enjoyment of life, I am afraid."

"If he became a miser he must have left some money."

"I suppose he did."

"Mother," asked Tom, earnestly, "are you not one of the nearest relatives?"

"I am as near as any."

"Who else is there?"

"My cousin Hannibal Carter, who is a dry goods merchant in Fordham, and three old maids, daughters of Reuben Pendergast, also cousins. They live in Scranton."

“I remember seeing them once, but I don’t remember meeting Mr. Carter.”

“He has a fashionable wife, and has never taken much notice of us. I have thought of applying to him for help in our present trouble, but I am convinced that, even if he were disposed to help us, his wife would prevent him if possible.”

“Then don’t apply to him, mother,” said Tom, who had his full share of spirit. “I would rather go to a stranger than to an unwilling relative. Think how kind Alfred Hudson has been to me, and he is not at all related. But, mother, don’t you think it possible that Uncle Brinton has left you something?”

“It is possible, but he is so peculiar that I cannot rely upon it. I have never told you, Tom, but three months since I wrote to him for a loan.”

“What did he reply?”

“I will get his letter.”

Mrs. Turner went to her bureau and from the top drawer took a shabby looking epistle, inclosed in a yellow envelope and written upon a piece of paper of irregular shape.

“Niece Helen,” it began, “I have received your letter, and I am sorry to hear that you are

short of money. I understood that your husband left you very well to do. Your boy must be able to work and help you. I am afraid you are not a good manager. There is nothing like economy. If I had not been economical I would be in the Scranton poorhouse before this. I am very poor, and I cannot afford the comforts which you enjoy. I have money enough to last me till I die, if I am *very careful*, but I have no money to lend or give away. I have no doubt you will get along, if you heed what I have said about economy.

Your uncle,

“BRINTON PENDERGAST.”

Tom read this with indignation.

“That is an insulting letter, mother,” he exclaimed. “Telling you to be economical! I should like to know how you can be any more economical than you are. I wish you had shown this letter to me when it came. I would have gone to Uncle Brinton and given him a piece of my mind.”

“If you had, Tom, you would have made him very angry, and spoiled all our chances of inheriting anything.”

“But to talk about our living better than he!” said Tom, with an indignant frown.

“I have no doubt it is strictly true. We have

lived very plainly, but I think it probable that our plain way of living would be luxury to Uncle Brinton. You must remember, Tom, that his mind is warped by his long and solitary life. Money saving has with him become a monomania. Perhaps it is because he has denied himself comforts that he has died sooner than he otherwise would."

"I don't see how he could live to seventy-nine if he has denied himself ordinary comforts."

"He has lived regularly, and that counts for a good deal."

"I am very sure he didn't die of gout," said Tom smiling.

"I think that may safely be said. I suspect we are in no danger from that source either."

"Shall you go to the funeral, mother?"

"I don't see how I can," hesitated Mrs. Turner. "I have no dress suitable, and it would cost money for the journey. But I should like you to go. Our family ought to be represented."

"Especially if we are remembered in the will. I can walk, mother. Scranton is only fifteen miles away."

"That is a long distance to walk, Tom."

"I am strong, mother. I can start in good

season, say at eight o'clock in the morning. You know the funeral is at one."

"I don't want you to walk both ways. You can take the stage back."

"How much is the fare?"

"It used to be seventy-five cents. Here is a dollar, Tom. You can pay out of this."

"Can you spare this money, mother?"

"You may bring home a legacy, Tom," said his mother, smiling evasively. She did not like to admit that this dollar constituted one half of her funds.

CHAPTER III.

TOM HAS AN ADVENTURE.

TOM was up bright and early, and started for Scranton at eight o'clock punctually. It was fortunately a pleasant day, which made the fifteen-mile walk less formidable. In three hours Tom covered ten miles, and found himself at eleven o'clock five miles from Scranton. As the funeral would not take place till one, he felt that he had ample time. Still he felt tired, and decided to rest ten minutes under a broad branching elm by the wayside.

The time had not quite elapsed, when a buggy drove past containing a young lady of eighteen and a boy of six. The horse had become fractious, and Tom saw an expression of alarm and dismay on the face of the young lady, who continued to hold the reins, but in tremulous hands.

Now Tom was very fond of horses, and not at all afraid of them. He saw the young lady needed assistance, and he sprang up promptly, and, dash-

ing forward, managed, at considerable personal risk, to stop the horse.

“ Oh ! thank you ! ” sighed the young lady in a tone of relief. “ Prince does not often behave so badly.”

“ He must have taken fright at something.”

“ Yes, I suppose so, though I can't think what it was.”

“ He seems still very nervous.”

“ And I am five miles from home. Oh, dear ! I wish I was there.”

“ Do you live in Scranton ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ If you would like,” said Tom, “ I will get in and drive you.”

“ I would like it very much, for you evidently understand horses better than I ; but I shall be taking you out of your way, perhaps.”

“ No, indeed : it will be helping me on my way, for I am going to Scranton, too.”

“ In that case I won't hesitate to accept your offer. Do you think you can get in without his starting ? ”

“ I will try.”

Tom let go the horse's head, and, before he had time to avail himself of his freedom, was in the buggy.

Prince started on a run, but Tom soon had him down to his ordinary pace.

“Do you live in Scranton?” asked the young lady, eying Tom inquisitively. “I don’t remember seeing you at any time.”

“No; I live in Hillsboro. I am going to the funeral of my mother’s uncle, Mr. Pendergast.”

“Indeed!” said the young lady, interested. “Then he is your great uncle.”

“Yes; did you know him?”

“I don’t think many people knew him,” said the young lady, hesitating. “He kept very much to himself.”

“So I have heard mother say. He was a miser, and did not allow himself the comforts of life.”

“I don’t believe you will grow up like him,” said the young lady, smiling.

“No, I hope not.”

“Your uncle, though he lived in a miserable way, must have left considerable money.”

“I hope so, for mother’s sake, who is one of the heirs.”

“It is a comfort to think that some one will enjoy it. I can’t fancy myself becoming a miser.”

“Mother says that Uncle Brinton might not

have become so, but for a disappointment in early life."

They sped rapidly over the road, and in little more than half an hour reached the village of Scranton.

"Would you like me to drive you to your own house?" asked Tom.

"Yes, if you please. I will guide you."

Tom stopped the buggy in front of a handsome house, and, jumping out, assisted the young lady and the boy to alight.

"When does your uncle's funeral take place?" she asked.

"At one o'clock."

"And it isn't quite twelve," she went on, consulting a small gold watch. "We shall have an early dinner, as mother has an engagement this afternoon. Won't you oblige me by staying and dining with us?"

"Thank you," said Tom, who was beginning to feel hungry.

"I ought to tell you that my name is Laura Scott, and that my father is a lawyer. I shall have a chance to introduce you at the table. William, you may take the horse and put him up. I am not sure that he deserves any dinner, as he undertook to run away with me. If it

hadn't been for this young gentleman, Herbert and I might have been upset and seriously injured."

"You don't say, Miss Laura?" ejaculated the stable boy, opening wide his eyes in surprise. "Was he scared at anything?"

"He must have been, though I don't know what. Will you come into the house—I don't know your name?" she said, turning to Tom.

"My name is Tom Turner."

"I thought it might be Pendergast."

"No; Uncle Brinton is related to me through my mother. I will go and help William, if you don't mind."

"Very well. The bell will ring for dinner. Then you will come in?"

"Thank you."

Tom felt rather more at home with the stable boy, though he had acted with perfect propriety when conversing with Miss Scott. William was quite curious to hear the particulars of the accident.

"Prince isn't often skeered," he said, "but I guess he felt nervous this morning. How did Miss Laura take it?"

"She was pale, but she kept hold of the reins."

"What did you do?"

"I sprang for the horse's head, and hung on till he stopped."

"Wasn't you afraid?"

"No ; I am never afraid of horses."

"I don't know as I would have done it, and I am used to Prince. He might have hurt ye."

"I didn't stop to think of that."

"He looks meek enough now. I have a great mind not to give him any oats."

"I suppose he couldn't help it. He was frightened."

"Horses are jest the skeeriest animals. Why, one of Dobson's horses—he's the stable keeper—got skeered at a towel hangin' over a fence, and dashed an open buggy into slivers. It does seem awful foolish for a big horse to be skeered at a towel ;" and William burst into what might be called a horse laugh.

"Did you know Miss Laura before?" he asked, as he put Prince in the stall.

"No ; I never saw her till this morning."

"Shouldn't wonder if she'd give you a present. She's awful generous."

"I don't ask for any present. I got a ride to Scranton when I should have had to walk."

"Where did it happen?"

"About five miles back."

“Well, that was something. Hullo, there’s the bell for dinner.”

“Are you going in?”

“No ; I go afterwards. Just go round to the front door, and they’ll let you in.”

Tom followed directions, and was admitted by Miss Laura herself, who led the way into the dining-room, and introduced Tom to her mother and father.

The latter, a gentleman of fifty, with hair just turning gray, shook hands with him cordially.

“So this is the young hero, is it?” he said.

“I am afraid I don’t deserve that title, sir,” answered Tom.

“At any rate,” said the lawyer, “you have done a great service to my daughter and little boy. They might have been seriously injured,” he added with a shudder.

“Heaven seems to have sent you to their aid,” said Mrs. Scott earnestly.

“We mustn’t say too much to Tom,” interposed the young lady playfully, “or he may lose his appetite, or think it unheroic to eat.”

“I am afraid I have a very unheroic appetite,” said Tom.

“I am glad of that,” said Mrs. Scott hospitably.

“I always like to see my guests eat.”

They sat down to the table, and Tom made good his word, for he ate heartily. Mr. Scott, or Judge Scott, as Tom found afterwards that he was called, asked him various questions about Brinton Pendergast and his relationship to him.

“If your mother requires a lawyer’s services in the matter,” he said, “she may freely call upon me, and it shall cost her nothing.”

“Thank you, sir !” said Tom gratefully.

As Tom rose to go, the judge put a sealed envelope into his hand.

“You can open that when you get home,” he said. “How are you going back ?”

“I expect to walk,” answered Tom.

“That won’t be necessary. The stage starts at four, and I have a stage ticket. That will save you a very fatiguing walk.”

On the whole, Tom felt as he left the house that he was in luck thus far.

If only his luck could continue !

CHAPTER IV.

THE MISER'S FUNERAL.

THE residence of old Brinton Pendergast was far from comfortable and attractive. It had once been painted, but the paint had long ago been washed off, and it had a neglected and dismantled appearance. There were but three rooms, a front room and a kitchen with a sloping roof on the lower floor, and a chamber above. The dead man lay in a plain coffin in the lower room. When Tom arrived, the other relatives were assembled.

First came Hannibal Carter, a short, stout, pompous looking man with grizzled side whiskers and small beady eyes, which were busily employed in scrutinizing the house and its contents. Three tall, slender old maids, Miss Flora, Sophie, and Jeanette Pendergast, sat in a row, dressed in black, their faces displaying a becoming melancholy. There was besides another relative whom Tom had forgotten, a young man about twenty-

eight, a dry goods salesman from New York, who was fashionably attired and looked fast. This was Hector Pendergast, son of a younger brother of the dead man. He looked from time to time at his watch, and seemed rather bored. He did not, like the Misses Pendergast, his cousins, think it necessary to assume an appearance of grief.

When Tom entered, the other relatives gave him a passing glance. Mr. Carter arched his brows, and shrugged his shoulders, as much as to say : "What business have you here?" The old maid sisters regarded him coldly, and exchanged glances, but bestowed no other mark of recognition. Tom would have felt embarrassed, had not Hector Pendergast signaled to him to come and take a seat beside him.

"Are you Tom Turner?" he whispered.

"Yes," answered Tom.

"I'm Hector Pendergast. I'm glad to see you. That old duffer there," indicating Hannibal Carter, "seems to think he is the great mogul and takes no notice of any of the rest. As for those venerable girls over there, they're not my style."

Tom could not help smiling, though he was aware it was indecorous.

Here the clergyman entered, and with him the

lawyer, who had sent the telegram, Mr. Charles Benson.

The latter rose and said, "As some of the relatives are from out of town, I will announce that at half-past two there will be a meeting at my office in the village to hear the reading of Mr. Pendergast's will."

There was a little rustle, showing that the announcement had an interest for some of those present.

Brief services followed, and then the funeral cortege, consisting of a hearse and two carriages, took its way to the village cemetery. Tom, Hector and Mr. Carter occupied one carriage. The minister and the three old maids occupied the other. A few persons from the village who had been attracted by curiosity, followed on foot.

When the funeral ceremonies were over, the heirs walked back to the office of lawyer Benson. Hector and Tom walked together, Mr. Hannibal Carter by himself a little in advance, and the three old maids on the other side of the street, wearing upon their faces a solemn look of bereavement.

"Do you expect anything, Tom?" asked Hector Pendergast, who was inclined to be sociable with his young cousin.

"Not for myself. I hope mother will get something. We are poor, and probably need it more than any of the rest."

"I don't know about that. I don't know how much property you and your mother have, but I haven't a cent, and am five hundred dollars in debt."

"I wouldn't have thought that from your appearance."

"The fact is, Tom, I am dreadfully extravagant. I get a salary of twenty dollars a week from my employers, Simpson, Crawford and Simpson, of Sixth Avenue, but I can't make both ends meet."

"We should feel rich on twenty dollars a week."

"I dare say, but you live in the country, don't you?"

"Yes, at Hillsboro."

"I live in the city, and of course I want a nice room, and must dress well. I am in debt to two tailors, to one a hundred dollars, to the other a hundred and twenty-five."

"Isn't that a good deal to spend on clothes?" asked Tom.

"Oh no, bless your soul! Why this suit I have on cost me sixty-five dollars."

"That would clothe me for a year and a half."

"My dear boy, if I dressed like you I should have to walk in the back streets. You look well enough for a boy, but I have a good many fashionable friends."

"Yes, I suppose that makes a difference."

"Have you any idea how much Uncle Brinton leaves?"

"Not the slightest. People say he was rich."

"Evidently he didn't spend anything. I am afraid my chances are not very good. Sixteen months ago I applied to him for a trifling loan—only fifty dollars, and what do you think he wrote me?"

"I can't tell," answered Tom, not without curiosity.

"He wrote me: 'If you can't make enough to live without borrowing in the city, go to the country, buy some overalls, and go to work for a farmer.' The idea of my wearing overalls!" exclaimed Hector indignantly.

"They wouldn't cost so much as the clothes you now wear," returned Tom with a laugh.

"So you see there isn't much hope for me. I hope you and your mother will get something."

"Thank you," said Tom gratefully.

"As for that pompous old duffer, Hannibal

Carter, he's got enough already, and doesn't need anything. Our beautiful and accomplished cousins, the three old maids, are dressmakers, I believe, or something of the kind, and no doubt, earn enough to keep them. Probably they don't move in fashionable society or cut a dash at the watering places."

"If they get the bulk of Uncle Brinton's money, you may have a chance to marry one of them," suggested Tom roguishly.

"Heaven forefend!" exclaimed the young man in a tone of horror. "I'd rather go to the almshouse."

The three Misses Pendergast also indulged in conversation on their way to the lawyer's office.

"Don't you think Uncle Brinton left as much as twelve thousand dollars, Sophie?" asked Flora.

"Goodness knows," interrupted Jeanette, who was the youngest of the three, and occasionally indulged in a playful humor; "he ought to, for he never spent anything."

"That would be four thousand dollars apiece," remarked Flora.

"But there are other relations," suggested Sophie.

"True; but Uncle Brinton was a man of sense. I don't think he would leave anything to Cousin

Carter, who already has money, and never took any notice of him or any other relatives. Why, he has never invited us to his house, though I am sure we should do him no discredit."

"If I get four thousand dollars, I'll spend two weeks at Saratoga next summer," interjected Jeanette.

"It would cost a good deal of money," said Flora cautiously. "But perhaps you think you might find a husband there?"

"Oh, you naughty girl! To suspect me of such a thing!" said Jeanette bashfully.

"But we haven't got the money yet," added Sophie in a practical tone, "so we had better not count the chickens before they are hatched. You have forgotten the other two relatives—Hector Pendergast and Aunt Turner."

"I am sure a city dude like Hector won't stand any chance, said Flora decidedly. "I have heard," she continued, in a tone of horror, "that he is *fast*! Curtis Cutler told me he called to see him, and was invited to spend the evening at a billiard saloon, or some other gilded haunt of iniquity. It would be a shame for poor Uncle Brinton's money to be spent in dissipation."

"Is Cousin Hector good-looking, do you think?" asked Jeanette coyly.

"I hope you don't dream of marrying him," said Flora, in a tone of strong disapproval.

"Goodness, sister Flora, did I say so?"

"No; but you seemed to be interested in the young man."

"He hasn't asked me yet," said Jeanette, "so there is no need to worry."

"There is Aunt Turner," said Sophie. "What do you think of her chances?"

"I'll tell you," said Flora. "I happen to know that she tried to borrow money of Uncle Brinton a while ago. He told me so, and he evidently didn't like it."

"Widows are apt to be selfish schemers," said Sophie, in a tone of satisfaction, "but they sometimes overreach themselves. Now we have never asked uncle for money."

"True; and you know I sent him a pair of slippers last Christmas that I embroidered myself."

"And I sent him a bottle of cologne," put in Jeanette.

"And I a muffler," added Sophie.

"I think, sisters, that our chance is pretty good," said Flora, "but here we are at the office."

Fifteen minutes later, all the heirs being as-

sembled, Mr. Benson drew out a folded paper from the safe, and said, after a preliminary cough :

“I hold in my hand the last will and testament of your late relative, Brinton Pendergast. I will proceed to read it.”

CHAPTER V.

READING THE WILL.

It may easily be imagined that Mr. Benson's announcement was listened to by the expectant heirs with earnest attention.

The will was evidently written by a lawyer, and began with the usual formal phrases. The first item of interest was as follows :

“ My house, in which I have lived for forty years, I leave, with the lot attached, to my nieces, daughters of my brother Reuben, who I have reason to think are saving girls, and will not squander what I give them. As they are past the age when they can expect to get married ” (the three sisters looked at each other with great indignation when this passage was read) “ they may find it for their advantage to move into the house, as it will save them rent. As the place is somewhat out of repair I leave them a hundred dollars to defray the expenses of renovation.”

The three nieces looked far from happy, or

gratified. They had expected much more. Probably the value of the house and lot at a liberal estimate would not exceed two hundred and fifty dollars, which with the hundred dollars added would make three hundred and fifty only.

Hector Pendergast could not wholly conceal his amusement at the discomfiture of his cousins.

“Poor old girls!” he whispered to Tom, “that’s rather a hard hit at them—about being past the marrying age, I mean. I give them joy of their bequest.”

This was the next item.

“My nephew Hector Pendergast will probably expect to be remembered. He might have had a comfortable competence by this time if he had not squandered his money on expensive clothes, theaters, and late suppers.”

“I wonder where the old man got his information,” whispered Hector to Tom. “That doesn’t look very promising.”

“Some months since,” proceeded the lawyer in his reading, “Hector applied to me for a loan of fifty dollars. I leave that amount as a bequest, advising him to put it in some savings bank, and not spend it all for neckties.”

“Fifty dollars! That’s more than I expected,”

whispered Hector. "But who is going to get the rest?"

Hannibal Carter had listened to the will thus far with satisfaction and amusement. He enjoyed the hits at his fellow heirs, and congratulated himself that their legacies were so light. The bulk of the property, he felt assured, would go to him. To be sure, there were Tom and his mother, but surely his Uncle Brinton would not be foolish enough to leave them much.

His turn came next.

"I think highly of the worldly wisdom of my nephew Hannibal Carter, who I understand is a prosperous man. He always looks out for his own interests, and in that way he has got on. He is pretty sure never to be reduced to poverty, or to end his days in the alms-house. As a mark of my appreciation I leave him a hundred shares in the Golden Crown Mine of Nevada. It was owing to his representation that I paid a thousand dollars for those shares five years since in a moment of weakness. Doubtless he received quite a handsome commission for selling them. But I am animated by a spirit of Christian forgiveness, and take pleasure in bequeathing them to my nephew Hannibal as an appropriate legacy. According to the latest information they are worth

now about ten cents a share, but perhaps they may some time become more valuable."

The face of Hannibal Carter was an interesting study as he listened to this paragraph. Disappointment, anger and mortification swept over it, and he frowned heavily. He knew that Hector and the three sisters would feel a sly satisfaction at his discomfiture ; thus far his bequest was the smallest of the three. Hector was to receive fifty dollars, the three sisters a hundred dollars and the house and lot, while his own bequest was not worth over ten dollars.

There were but two heirs left—Tom and his mother.

"Are they to have the rest?" mentally asked the other heirs, and all eyes were turned upon Tom. The glances of Hannibal Carter and the Misses Pendergast were decidedly hostile, but Hector looked good natured and friendly.

"I congratulate you, Tom," he whispered. "The rest of the property must be going to your mother and you."

As for Tom, he was like one dazed. Was it possible, he asked himself, that this good fortune was coming to them ? If so, he would feel disposed to give something to Hector, his city cousin,

who alone of all had shown him kindness and sympathy.

The remainder of the will was awaited by all with breathless interest.

“To my niece, Mrs. Helen Turner, of Hillsboro, in this State, I leave the sum of a hundred dollars, hoping that she may expend it carefully and economically.

“To her son Thomas, I leave my leather trunk with all that it contains. Though I have had it for nearly fifty years it is still in good preservation. I especially enjoin upon him never to part with this trunk. As it has been so long in my possession I should not like to have it go into the hands of strangers. My furniture may as well go with the house, and I bequeath it, therefore, to my three nieces aforesaid, daughters of my brother Reuben.

“I am a poor man, but it may be that there are some items of property which I have overlooked. I name my niece, Mrs. Helen Turner, as my residuary legatee, and direct that any such property be handed over to her, after my funeral expenses are paid.”

The lawyer ceased reading, to the profound astonishment of the heirs.

“Is that all?” asked Hannibal Carter.

“Yes, sir,” answered the lawyer.

“But only the house and lot and two hundred and fifty dollars have been mentioned.”

“You forget the mining stock,” suggested the lawyer.

Mr. Carter came near exclaiming, “Drat the mining stock !” but checked himself in time.

“That is of little account,” he said.

“It cost your uncle, as I understand, a thousand dollars.”

“We are not inquiring what it cost,” said Hannibal stiffly. “It is not worth now over ten dollars.”

“It seems to have been an unwise investment,” said Mr. Benson.

“It was. It was a great disappointment to me as well as my uncle. I had twice as many shares as he.”

“And they cost you the same price?”

“Of course.”

It may be mentioned that this was a deliberate falsehood. Mr. Carter was one of the incorporators and original owners of the mine. His stock cost him nothing, and moreover was sold by him partly to his uncle, and partly to other friends, at ten dollars per share.

“But that is neither here nor there. I ask you,

Mr. Benson, what has become of the bulk of my uncle's property ?”

“Have you any evidence that he possessed anything except what he has specified in the will ?”

“I have always looked upon Uncle Brinton as a rich man.”

“How rich ?”

“I supposed him worth ten thousand dollars at least.”

“I thought myself that he was worth more than appears, but I have no positive information. He was very close mouthed and did not make me his confidant in that respect.”

“But you drew up his will, did you not ?”

“Yes.”

“Did he say nothing to you about any other items of property ?”

“Not a word.”

“There is some mystery here,” said Hannibal Carter with a frown. “I for one am not satisfied.”

“Neither are we,” said the three sisters in unison.

Hector and Tom Turner said nothing.

“I think, sir,” said Carter to the lawyer, “it is your duty to institute an investigation to ascertain the whereabouts of the other property.”

“If there is any.”

“I tell you there must be !” said Hannibal, pounding the table at his side.

“It may be as you say,” said Mr. Benson. “If there is, you will remember that Mrs. Turner is residuary legatee.”

Hannibal’s countenance fell. He had forgotten that.

CHAPTER VI.

HANNIBAL CARTER'S IDEA.

I BELIEVE that is all," said the lawyer, folding up the will. "Are there any questions to be asked?"

"Can you tell me when I can get my uncle's trunk?" asked Tom. "If I could get it to-day, I might have it sent home."

"If you will give me your address I will have it sent you by express."

"Thank you, sir."

"How soon will the money be paid?" asked Miss Flora Pendergast.

"I cannot promise, but it shall be as early as possible."

This answered a question which Tom also intended to ask, for the hundred dollars would be very acceptable.

"And how soon can we take possession of the house?" asked Sophie.

"Within a week."

Meanwhile Mr. Carter had been busily engaged in thinking. The fact that his uncle had left barely two hundred and fifty dollars in legacies was most astonishing. That this was all he possessed he could not for a moment believe. Where then, was the rest? Where did misers usually conceal their money? In all probability he had buried it either in the cellar or somewhere in the lot attached to his house. In that case the three sisters would eventually find it and be made rich at the expense of the other heirs.

The more Hannibal Carter thought of this idea, the more probable it seemed. Good Heavens! was he to be robbed like this? Why should he not buy the house and lot, and become himself the possessor of his uncle's secret hoards? It could be bought, doubtless, for a trifle, unless indeed the same idea had suggested itself to the three sisters. The very thought made Mr. Carter nervous, and he determined to lose no time in making an offer for the property.

"What use do you propose to make of your Uncle Brinton's house?" he asked in a careless tone. "Shall you follow his advice, and go there to live?"

"The idea!" exclaimed Jeanette, tossing her head. "We might as well bury ourselves alive."

"I agree with you. It is a most undesirable residence. Besides, I don't agree with Uncle Brinton in thinking you past the marrying age. I should not be surprised to see you all married within five years."

"Oh, you naughty man!" said Jeanette playfully, but the remark quite softened the hearts of the three sisters, who began to think Cousin Hannibal a much more agreeable man than they had supposed.

"If I were you I would sell the property," proceeded Mr. Carter.

"I don't know but it would be a good idea," said Flora.

"Then you could keep the hundred dollars for other purposes. If you spent it on repairs it would, in my opinion, be thrown away."

"I think we might find it rather difficult to find a purchaser," suggested Sophie.

"I don't suppose many would want it," said the crafty Hannibal. "Then there would be taxes to pay every year."

Flora and Sophie began to look anxious.

"Can you suggest anything, Cousin Hannibal?" asked Sophie.

"Why I might perhaps buy it myself—for a reasonable sum," answered Hannibal deliberately.

"But what would you do with it?" asked the three sisters in unison.

"That's a conundrum," answered Mr. Carter, smiling. "I am afraid I couldn't do much with it, but I have a feeling that it ought to remain in the family. I suppose I might get a tenant. I know a poor man whose only family consists of his wife, who would be glad to occupy it. I don't know whether he could afford to pay me anything, but he would take care of it."

"How much would you be willing to give?" asked Flora in a business-like tone.

"I hardly know what to say. I haven't had time to think of it. I should not rate it as worth over two hundred dollars."

"Oh, Cousin Hannibal!" exclaimed the three Misses Pendergast in concert. "It *must* be worth five hundred!"

"If you receive an offer anywhere near that amount you had better accept it. Suppose you refer the matter to Mr. Benson."

About half an hour was spent in haggling about the price. Finally Mr. Carter agreed to purchase the property for three hundred and seventy-five dollars, which the lawyer assured the sisters he considered a fair price. Papers were drawn up at once, and Hannibal Carter, to his secret satis-

faction, became possessed of the house and lot, *and all that it contained*. His cousins had no suspicion of his object in making the purchase; neither had Hector nor Tom, but Mr. Benson had, and his eyes twinkled with amusement, but he said nothing.

“I congratulate you on your bargain, Mr. Carter,” he said.

Hannibal shrugged his shoulders in assumed indifference.

“It is merely a matter of sentiment that induced me to buy,” he responded. “I presumed my fair cousins” (here the three sisters smiled complacently, and mentally pronounced Cousin Hannibal a very nice man) “would sell to some one, and I didn’t want the house where Uncle Brinton had lived for forty years to go out of the family. Not that I have any great reason to feel grateful to him. My bequest isn’t worth over ten dollars.”

“But, Cousin Hannibal, you are a rich man already. You won’t mind it.”

“I am not so rich, perhaps, as you think,” returned Mr. Carter; but his tone was complacent, and his air sleek and comfortable—just what might be expected of a prosperous man.

“You might make an offer for Tom’s trunk,” suggested Hector Pendergast.

Hannibal Carter shrugged his shoulders.

"As it probably contains Uncle Brinton's wardrobe, it might be in your line," he rejoined.

"Heavens!" exclaimed Hector in comic dismay. "You don't want to dress me out in the old man's rusty clothes, do you?"

"You would attract attention on Broadway," said Tom, laughing.

"As you will in the streets of Hillsboro, Cousin Tom."

"I am afraid the contents of the trunk will be of very little use to me," said Tom. "I can use the trunk, as I have none."

"You must never part with it, according to the terms of the will."

"So that I couldn't sell it to you even if you wished to buy it."

"I will try to get along without it. But it is getting late." Here Hector took out his watch. "I must be getting to the depot if I want to get back to the city to-night."

"I will walk along with you," said Tom. "I believe the stage starts from the station."

"A very frivolous young man!" said Flora Pendergast disapprovingly, as Hector left the room.

"I think he is rather good-looking," said Jeanette.

"What is the outward appearance?" asked Sophie, in a moralizing tone. "I have heard that Hector Pendergast plays billiards, and very probably drinks."

"That is terrible!" said Flora. "How severe was uncle's reference to him in his will!"

"I presume he will soon spend the fifty dollars uncle left him. He is not very likely to invest it in a savings bank. What do you think of the Turner boy?"

"He is too young to consider. Boys have no character."

"He is not past the marrying age," said Hannibal Carter, smiling. "I expect Cousin Helen—Mrs. Turner—will be very much disappointed with the contents of the will."

"We are all disappointed. We have reason to be," said the three sisters in unison.

"Of course, of course. Mr. Benson, may I have a word with you?"

"Certainly, Mr. Carter."

Hannibal gave some directions in regard to the house and lot which he had just bought, and then took his leave.

The next week he paid a quiet visit to it and

made a search in the cellar and about the grounds, but could find no trace of any secret hiding-place for money. He did not give up, however, but made other visits at intervals, and managed, without attracting attention, to make a pretty thorough examination of the lot, but met only with disappointment.

"I won't give it up," he said to himself. "It may be hidden somewhere here yet, but I can't surmise where. If I find nothing, then I am a hundred and fifty dollars out, for I have paid as much as that more than the miserable old shanty and lot are worth."

After Hector left for the city Tom remained in the depot till the coach was ready for Hillsboro. It was a long and fatiguing ride, and Tom felt very weary when he reach his mother's door.

"What luck, Tom?" asked Mrs. Turner anxiously.

"Not much, mother. Uncle Brinton leaves me an old leather trunk and you a hundred dollars."

"A hundred dollars!" repeated Mrs. Turner. "Why, that is a good deal of money—to us!"

"Then you are satisfied, mother?"

"Yes; I made up my mind to be satisfied whatever came."

CHAPTER VII.

WHAT THE TRUNK CONTAINED.

THE next day the trunk—Tom's bequest—arrived by express. Mrs. Turner and Tom awaited it with curiosity. Externally it was far from handsome or attractive. The leather was worn and soiled, and it looked like an heirloom that had not improved with age. By some inadvertence no key had been sent with the trunk, but Mrs. Turner found one that would open it.

It was filled with clothing, but such clothing! On the top was a camlet cloak, rusty and faded. Next came a coat in the style of forty years since with very short waist and long tails. Then there were two pairs of pantaloons, frayed and stained. Towards the bottom were some shirts and under-clothing, the latter so shrunk as to be scarcely large enough for a boy of ten.

"I don't think there is anything here that I can make use of, mother," said Tom, smiling. "I should make more of a sensation than I would like

if I arrayed myself in any of Uncle Brinton's suits."

"You would have one thing to boast of, that Solomon in all his glory was never arrayed like you."

"Good for you, mother!" exclaimed Tom, laughing. "What shall I do with them, though?"

Before Mrs. Turner had a chance to answer a ring was heard at the outer door.

"I will go, mother," said Tom.

At the door he found a dilapidated looking tramp, dressed in rags and tatters, wearing on his head a sorry looking hat.

"Young man," said the tramp mournfully, "I have seen better days."

"I am glad to hear it," returned Tom in a tone of amusement.

"Such as you see me—a thing of shreds and tatters," said the tramp theatrically—"I was once an actor. I have had my triumphs on the stage."

"How did you get reduced so low?" asked Tom, this time in a tone of sympathy.

"It was drink—drink and hard luck. It was not all my fault."

"And now you cannot get employment?"

"Look at me and judge for yourself. If a

tramp were wanted I should not have to provide a costume."

"What can I do for you?" inquired Tom.

"Have you perchance some clothes which would make me look more respectable? I hate to flaunt my rags before the eyes of the public."

Tom was struck with a sudden idea. He saw a way to make use of the contents of the trunk.

"I don't know but I can oblige you," he said.

"I have had a trunk full of clothing left to me by my great uncle. They are old-fashioned, but——"

"Anything is better than these rags," said the visitor.

"Then come in, and I will show them to you."

The decayed player followed Tom into the sitting room, considerably to the surprise of Mrs. Turner.

"Mother," said Tom, "this gentleman is an actor out of luck. He needs clothes. Do you think it will do to give him some articles from the trunk?"

"Yes, if he will accept them," answered Mrs. Turner doubtfully.

"I am not proud, madam," said the tramp. "So that they are whole I will gladly put off these rags, and array myself in the garments of your lamented kinsman."

“Then if you will help my son carry the trunk up-stairs, you can try on some of the clothes, and if you find any that fit you you are welcome to them.”

“Thank you, madam.”

Between them Tom and his new acquaintance carried the trunk up-stairs, and into our hero's room.

“Now, sir, help yourself,” said Tom.

The tramp lifted the coat and surveyed it.

“Like me,” he said, “it has seen better days. It is rusty, but so am I. Yet it is whole, and I will take it by your leave. And here,” he continued, lifting a claw-hammer coat, “is a garment that in its time no doubt was sightly.”

“Here is a frock-coat,” said Tom, diving underneath, and fishing up a more modern garment.

“’Twill suit me better.”

“Try it on. See if it will fit you.”

Fortunately the actor was of about the same size as Uncle Brinton, and the coat fitted him well.

“It fits you better than it would me,” said Tom.

“I shall be glad to keep it. Is there a waist-coat goes with it?”

“Here it is.”

“Good ! And now for the nether garments.”

“Here is a pair of pantaloons, but I can’t recommend them.”

“Never mind ! They are better than these.”

It was quite true, for the actor’s trousers were only the wreck of what they once had been. One leg was shortened by several inches—the other was rent lengthwise from the knee, and hung in ribbons from a patch at this point.

“Yes,” and Tom, “I think they are rather ahead of what you have on.”

“I will make the change forthwith, by your leave.”

“Certainly. Have you need of shirts ? I can’t offer you underclothing, for that in the trunk is shrunk badly.”

“By all means,” answered the tramp, as he lifted a shirt grown yellow with age, but whole and clean. “It will be a luxury to feel that I have laid aside the disreputable garment that has served me for the last three weeks in lieu of a better. Why, this shirt is a luxury. I shall feel proud indeed in my new togger.”

“Then, sir, you can at once make the change.”

The tramp quickly stripped off his rags, and clothed himself in the wardrobe of Uncle Brinton.

“How do I look ?” he asked.

"Like a gentleman of the old school," answered Tom.

"Now let me try on the cloak!"

Tom threw the camlet cloak over his shoulders.

"Ha! I feel like a new man!" said the tramp.

"I can almost believe that Uncle Brinton has come to life again," observed Tom.

"My uncle! Oh, my prophetic soul, my uncle!" Ah, my young friend, I have had many dealings with my uncle."

"I can easily believe it," said Tom, smiling.

"Now, if you will give me a couple of old newspapers, I will wrap up these memorials of my former self, and lay them somewhere by the wayside, so that any one who likes can appropriate them."

"It will be a treasure for some one," said Tom amused.

"Will it not?" returned the actor with an answering smile. "The finder will little dream that it is the wardrobe of John Launcelot De Lacy, who has appeared in some of the principal theaters in New York, Philadelphia, Boston and Chicago, not to mention fifty minor towns and cities throughout the Union."

"You don't care for the dress coat?"

"Yes, I will take it. It may come in play. You are liberal, young sir."

"It is no sacrifice on my part. I should never wear it.

"Have you dined?" added Tom.

"I did once upon a time—not recently."

"Then my mother invites you to sit down with us."

"Thanks exceedingly! If you will allow me to wash my hands and face."

"Certainly. If you don't mind coming down to the kitchen."

"Go on! I will attend thee!"

"Mother," said Tom, "let me introduce you to our new uncle, Mr. John Launcelot De Lacy——"

"Of Niblo's and other theaters," amended the actor.

"He will do us the honor of dining with us."

"He is welcome."

"Thanks, fair sir, and gracious madam. As soon as I have removed the dust of travel I will gladly avail myself of your generous hospitality."

At the dinner table the actor amused them by anecdotes and other reminiscences of his wandering career, and they felt well repaid for their kindness, finding him a most entertaining companion. When they parted it was with mutual good wishes.

“I go forth a new man,” he said, waving his hand, “a man of your creation, no longer a thing of rags and tatters, but a worthy and respectable though somewhat rusty old gentleman. Farewell, and God be with you ! ”

“My legacy has done some good, mother,” said Tom.

As he drew his handkerchief from his pocket, an envelope dropped to the floor.

“What is that, Tom ? ” asked Mrs. Turner.

“It was given me by Judge Scott of Scranton. He told me not to open it till I got home. I suppose I am now at liberty to do so.”

Tom took his penknife and cut open the envelope at one end. A surprise awaited him.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT THE ENVELOPE CONTAINED.

THE envelope contained five ten-dollar bills, and these few lines on a half sheet of note paper :

“MY YOUNG FRIEND :—You have done a great service to my daughter and little son, in saving them from a probable upset. Accept the fifty dollars inclosed, not as compensation, but as a slight mark of my friendly regard. Sincerely yours,

“JAMES SCOTT.”

“Look at that, mother !” exclaimed Tom, joyfully.

“How much is it, Tom ?”

“Fifty dollars.”

Mrs. Turner's face reflected Tom's joy.

“Truly this is a happy day for us,” said his mother. “Now we shall be able to meet the interest on the mortgage.”

“When does it come due ?”

“To-day.”

“I had forgotten all about it.”

"Squire Kent won't be likely to forget it."

"No, he is always sharp on money matters. By gracious, there he comes ! I will go to the door."

Squire Kent was a tall, thin man with a long Roman nose. He owned three houses in the village which were rented out. He was very punctilious in exacting his rent when it was due, and never allowed sickness to be an excuse for delay.

"Is your mother at home, Thomas ?" he asked.

"Yes, sir ; will you walk in ?"

"Thank you. I come on a little matter of business."

"Good morning, Squire Kent," said the widow, politely.

"Good morning, madam. I believe—ahem ! your interest is due to-day."

"Yes, sir. If you have the receipt ready Tom will pay you."

Squire Kent looked slightly surprised. From information supplied by Clarence he had supposed the Turners were short of money.

Tom drew out two ten-dollar bills.

"Here is twenty dollars," he said. "Please give me the change."

The squire arched his brows in great surprise.

"I am glad that things are going well with

you," he said. "My son Clarence told me that your uncle in Scranton is dead."

"Yes, Uncle Brinton is dead."

"I hope he left you something," continued the squire, suspecting that this accounted for the ten-dollar bills.

"He left me a trunk of old clothes," said Tom ; "but it would hardly do for me to wear any of them. I should be the laughing-stock of the school."

"Indeed !" said the squire puzzled. "Did he leave much property ?"

"Scarcely any," answered Tom.

"Surely he must have had some. What could he have done with it ?"

"I believe he invested in mining stock some years since."

"Ah ! that accounts for it. I lost some myself in the same way. Well, good morning."

The squire left the house, and Tom went to the village store on an errand. In front of the store he met Clarence Kent, who surveyed him with curiosity.

"I see you've had your pants mended," he said.

"Yes."

"I wouldn't wear mended clothes,"

“Nor I, perhaps, if I were in your place.”

Clarence, whose weak point was curiosity, followed Tom into the store.

Tom's order amounted to ninety-eight cents. To the surprise of Clarence he quietly produced a ten-dollar bill and tendered it in payment.

“Where did you get so much money?” asked Clarence.

“I got it honestly,” answered Tom with a smile.

“Humph! have you got any more of them?”

“That would be telling.”

“I don't understand. I thought you and your mother were poor.”

“So we are, but we are not penniless.”

“Has my father been round to your house this morning?”

“Yes.”

“Did you pay him his interest?”

“Yes.”

“Ah, I see! Your uncle left you some money.”

“He left my mother a hundred dollars, but she hasn't got it yet.”

“Didn't he leave you anything?”

“Yes, he left me a trunk of his old clothes.”

“Then you won't have to buy any for a long time.”

“They won't do me any good unless I open a

second hand clothing store. I've disposed of some already."

"Who bought them?"

"No one. I fitted out an unfortunate actor who came to the door dressed in rags."

"I met him. He wore an old, rusty camlet cloak that looked as if it came over in the May-flower."

"That's the man!" answered Tom, smiling.

"Why didn't you wear it yourself?"

"I didn't want you to get a chance to laugh at me."

"You're getting proud. You may be sorry you didn't keep it for yourself."

"Or for some one of my friends. It might become you," said Tom slyly.

Clarence drew himself up with hauteur.

"Do you mean to insult me?" he asked.

"Not at all. It's only a little joke."

"I don't like such jokes."

"Then I apologize. But look at that old woman! She must be one of the gipsies from the encampment."

On an unoccupied lot just outside the village a band of gipsies had erected their tents the day before. They were on their way to the county town, in which a cattle show was to be held that

would be likely to draw together a crowd of people.

The woman was stout, somewhat bent, and very swarthy. Her eyes were coal black, sharp and piercing.

“Do you want your fortunes told, young gentlemen?” she croaked.

“How much do you charge?” asked Clarence eagerly, for he was, as has been said, gifted with great curiosity, and was superstitious enough to believe in fortune-tellers.

“Cross my palm with a silver quarter, and I will unfold the future to you.”

“Won’t you take fifteen cents?”

The woman shook her head. She was shrewd enough to read in Clarence’s face that she would get her price if she stood out for it.

“Here it is, then,” said Clarence, reluctantly producing the coin.

The old crone took his hand, and seemed to study it profoundly.

“I see pride here,” she said, “pride and selfishness. Remember, young man, that a haughty spirit goes before a fall.”

Clarence looked annoyed.

“Haven’t you anything better than that to tell?”

“ You will inherit money,” she continued, “ but you may lose it. I see sorrow before you unless you learn wisdom.”

“ I don't believe you know anything about it,” said Clarence spitefully.

“ That is all ! ” said the crone, dropping his hand, “ and now won't the other young gentleman have his fortune told ? ”

“ I have no money to spare,” said Tom, “ but if you are poor, take this,” and he handed her a nickel.

“ Thank you, young sir. Give me your hand, and I will read it for that.”

“ That isn't fair ! ” blurted out Clarence. “ You charged me a quarter.”

“ Five cents is more to him than a quarter to you.”

“ That's where you're right, old lady ! ” said Clarence complacently.

“ This is the line of prosperity,” said the gipsy. “ You will be fortunate, because you deserve to be. The sun will shine brighter at noon than in the morning.”

“ You are giving him all the good luck,” grumbled Clarence, enviously.

“ It is not I, it is his fate. Here I see a cloud ; it is near at hand. But it won't last long. It

will break away, and the sun will shine afterwards."

More was said, but this was the most important. The gipsy hobbled away, for she was lame, and the two boys were left standing at the street corner.

"What do you think of it, Tom?" asked Clarence.

"I don't think she knows any more about the future than we do," answered Tom.

"I guess you're right," added Clarence relieved. "It was mean to give me such a bad fortune when I gave her a quarter."

"It isn't as if she had any control over the future."

"Then you don't believe in fortune-telling?"

"Not I."

They were about to part when up came Bob Ainsworth, panting with haste.

"Have you heard the news?" he said.

"No; what is it?" asked both boys in a breath.

"Mr. Thatcher has lost his wallet, containing a hundred dollars, all in ten-dollar bills," was the answer.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PLOT AGAINST TOM.

MR. THATCHER kept a dry goods store, and was the uncle of Clarence, having married a sister of his mother.

"What!" exclaimed Clarence in excitement.
"Uncle John has lost a hundred dollars?"

"Yes."

Clarence turned swiftly upon Tom. It was quite evident that suspicion had entered his mind.

"That's a good many ten-dollar bills."

"Yes, it is."

"The person is pretty likely to be found out, if he undertakes to pass them."

"But he probably won't," said Bob Ainsworth innocently, quite unaware that Tom was in Clarence's thoughts.

"I don't know about that," said Clarence significantly. "Well, I must be going."

"I hope your uncle will get back his money," said Tom.

"That's very kind of you," returned Clarence in an unpleasant tone. "I don't know about his getting back the money, but he will probably find out who stole it."

Tom flushed up. He had not at first understood that he was under suspicion, but now Clarence's tone revealed it. He could not afford to be silent, and so strengthen the suspicion.

"I hope he will find out who was the thief, if the wallet was stolen," he said. "Perhaps it was accidentally dropped, and will be restored to him by the finder."

"I think it would be well for the finder to restore it," said Clarence in a pointed way. "Well, good-by, Bob."

Both boys looked after him.

"Why didn't he bid you good-by too, Tom?" asked Bob.

"Clarence isn't fond of me," answered Tom smiling.

"I never supposed he admired me."

"Besides, he suspects that I took the money."

"You? Nonsense! What possible reason can he have for such a belief?"

"He saw me change a ten-dollar bill at the grocery store just now."

"Indeed! You are richer than I supposed, Tom."

"Besides, he will probably find out that I paid the rent this morning in two ten-dollar bills."

Bob looked astonished.

"I had no idea you were so rich," he said.

"I can account for the possession of the bills, and of two more that I have in my pocket," said Tom. "At present I don't care to say any more."

"Of course you can," said Bob. "I would as soon trust to your honesty as that of any boy in Hillsboro."

"You only do me justice, Bob."

"Still I think Clarence means mischief. I could tell it by his look when he left us."

"He may do all the mischief he likes," said Tom manfully.

Meanwhile Clarence hurried along the streets to his uncle's store. He felt that he had startling intelligence to communicate, and this gave him a feeling of importance.

John Thatcher, the merchant, was standing at his desk in one corner of the store. His face indicated mental disturbance, for he was a close man, and the loss of a hundred dollars annoyed him very much.

On the outside of the store was posted this notice.

LOST. A wallet containing a hundred dollars in ten-dollar bills. Whoever will return the same to the subscriber will be suitably rewarded.

JOHN THATCHER.

"Uncle John, I see you have lost a wallet full of money," said Clarence, abruptly.

"Yes; have you heard anything of it?" inquired the dry goods merchant eagerly.

"Well, not exactly."

"What do you mean by 'not exactly'?" demanded Mr. Thatcher sharply. "Either you have heard something or you have not."

"I haven't heard anything."

"Then don't waste my time."

"But I have seen something."

"What have you seen?"

"I have seen Tom Turner pay for some groceries with a ten-dollar bill."

"I don't know that that proves anything."

"Isn't it queer that Tom, who is as poor as poverty, should have a ten-dollar bill in his possession?"

"Well, there is something in that," admitted

his uncle. "Did you say anything to him on the subject?"

"Yes; I asked him where he got it."

"And what did he answer?"

"That that would be telling."

"Humph! did he seem confused or embarrassed?"

"I can't say he did, but Tom has a good deal of cheek."

This was the opinion of Clarence, but he would hardly have found any one in Hillsboro to agree with him. In fact Tom was extremely popular. He had a frank, straightforward manner that generally produced a favorable impression even on first acquaintance and did not wear off afterwards.

"Besides," added Clarence, "he paid father six months' interest on the mortgage this morning."

Clarence did not need to explain what mortgage, as Mr. Thatcher was aware of the lien on Mrs. Turner's little property held by his brother-in-law.

"Do you know how much this interest amounted to, Clarence?"

"Fifteen dollars."

"Then he probably used at least one ten-dollar

bill in paying it. I should like to see your father about it."

"I'll run home and ask him," said Clarence with alacrity.

He was not always, nor indeed often, so accommodating, but he had great hopes of getting Tom into a scrape, and this made him unusually obliging.

He started for the door, but it proved to be unnecessary for him to go home, as he found his father on the piazza studying the notice of the loss.

"Uncle John wants to see you, father," said Clarence.

"When did he lose this wallet?" inquired Squire Kent abruptly. "This is the first I have heard of it. Does he suspect any one?"

"I do."

"You do? What do you know about it?"

"I saw Tom Turner change a ten-dollar bill this morning at the grocery store."

"Ha! Why he paid me the interest this morning in two ten-dollar bills."

"Then he's the thief sure enough!" said Clarence in exultation. "Come right in and tell uncle. Won't it make a stir when it comes out that Tom Turner is dishonest?"

"He may have found the money," suggested the squire.

"Even if he did he had no right to use it."

"That is true."

"Uncle John," said Clarence eagerly, "it's all true about Tom Turner having stolen your wallet."

"You are too fast, Clarence," said his father. "You jump to conclusions too rapidly. The circumstances are suspicious, it is true, but nevertheless he may have got the money in some other way."

It had just occurred to the squire that if the interest had been paid to him in stolen money he would have to refund it to his brother-in-law, and this would be far from agreeable.

"Between you both I can't understand a thing," said John Thatcher peevishly. "If you know anything about the matter tell me."

Clarence was the chief spokesman, being more eager than his father to get Tom into trouble.

"Then it appears the boy has paid away three ten-dollar bills!" said John Thatcher grimly. "I think there is no doubt he is a thief. Well, the young rascal will find there is a rod in pickle for him."

"What are you going to do, uncle?" asked Clarence.

"What am I going to do? I am going to have that money back."

The squire winced. That meant he would have to give up the two ten-dollar bills that had been paid to him. Besides, as he thought ruefully, he had paid Tom five dollars in change.

"Don't be hasty, John," he said. "The boy may have come by the money honestly."

"Yes, he may," said John Thatcher in a sarcastic tone, "but I leave it to your common sense what chance is there of it."

"You know his uncle, or rather his mother's uncle, has just died. He may have left the Turners some money."

"No, he didn't," said Clarence. "Tom told me this very morning that he only left him a trunk of old clothes."

"That settles it," said Mr. Thatcher. "It is clear the young rascal has been spending my money. I am much obliged to you, Clarence, for putting me on the right track."

"I believe you offered a reward, Uncle John," said Clarence significantly.

"For the recovery of the money—yes. When I get all the money back I won't forget you."

This was not encouraging, for Tom had already spent a part as it appeared.

“You ought to pay me a percentage on what you recover. If you don’t hurry up he will spend the rest.”

“I shall act at once. Go and find Constable Staples and send him to me. I will ask you, brother Kent, to make out a warrant of arrest.”

“I will go back to my office and make one out but I don’t think, John, you can demand back what has been received in good faith.”

“You wouldn’t say that if the money lost had been yours.”

CHAPTER X.

TOM IS ARRESTED.

THOUGH the insinuations of Clarence had made an unpleasant impression on him, Tom did not anticipate that any harm would result therefrom. It seemed absurd that any one should suspect him of stealing, but of course Clarence Kent was only too glad to believe evil of him. So Tom went home with an easy mind.

“That fifty dollars came in handy, mother,” he said. “We have paid the interest money and got in a supply of groceries, and still there are over thirty dollars left. That will help us for a good while.”

“The money is yours, Tom, and you must buy something for yourself out of it.”

“Then if you don’t mind I will buy a pair of shoes. I have worn nearly through the sole of one of those I have on.”

“Go and get a pair at once, Tom,” said his mother. “I am glad you have found something you need.”

"I will go right round to Mr. Gould's, and if he has anything to suit me I will leave this pair of shoes to be half soled and heeled."

"That will be a good idea."

Tom took his hat and bent his steps to the shoe store of Asaph Gould, the village cobbler and shoemaker.

"Good afternoon, Tom," said the old man pleasantly as Tom entered.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Gould. Have you got a pair of shoes that will fit me?"

"I think I have a pair large enough," answered Asaph with a chuckle.

"If you haven't, you must have a poor assortment. I wear only sixes."

"I have a very good bargain for you, then. It is a pair I made to order for Clarence Kent, but he found fault with them and wouldn't take them. Catch me making another pair for the young dude!"

"I am afraid they will be too expensive for me, then."

"Clarence was to have paid me four dollars, but as they are left on my hands I will let you have them for three."

"I have not generally paid as high as that," said Tom, hesitating.

"Because you have generally bought ready made shoes. These will outlast two pairs of machine made shoes."

"Then I think I will venture to take them if they fit me."

"Try them on."

Tom did so, and found the shoes an admirable fit. His foot had never appeared to such advantage before.

"They fit me like a glove," he said in a tone of satisfaction.

"Considerably better than a glove," said the shoemaker, who was fond of his joke.

"On my hand, of course," said Tom, smiling.

"Will you wear them?"

"Yes, I think so, and leave the old pair to be half soled and heeled, if you think they are worth it."

"Yes; the uppers are good, and will stand new soles. Leave them on the floor, and I will attend to them."

Tom left the shoe store feeling very well pleased with his bargain. Considerably to his surprise Clarence was sauntering along outside.

"I see you have a pair of new shoes," he said in an unpleasant tone.

"Yes."

"Why, it's the same pair that Mr. Gould made for me."

"As you didn't take them I did."

"Humph ! you seem to be getting high toned."

"In wearing your shoes ?"

"Yes ; they are an expensive pair. You seem to be spending money pretty freely."

Tom stopped short and looked into the face of his companion.

"You seem to take a great interest in my concerns," he said.

"Yes, I do, and I have my reasons," retorted Clarence significantly.

"I am glad to hear it, but I am afraid your reasons are not friendly ones."

"Money that comes easily goes easily," said Clarence in an oracular tone.

"So I have heard."

"And you will soon get rid of your hundred dollars."

"Who told you that I have a hundred dollars ?" asked Tom quickly.

"No one ; I guessed it."

"Then you guessed wrong. I only had fifty."

"Indeed !" said Clarence, incredulously. "I advise you not to spend any more money."

"Why not ?"

"It may be the worse for you."

"Look here, Clarence Kent, I don't understand you, and I don't care to understand you. You seem to be interfering with my business in an impertinent manner."

"You dare to call me impertinent, you clodhopper?" exclaimed Clarence, reddening with indignation. "Why, a year from now you'll be in the poorhouse or in jail."

At this insult Tom's temper got the better of him, and in an instant Clarence found himself sprawling on the ground.

He got up, pale with passion, and shook his fist at Tom.

"I'd give you a whipping," he exclaimed, "only I don't want to soil my hands with you. You'll suffer for this."

"Then you shouldn't have insulted me."

"I don't accept your apologies," said Clarence.

"I haven't made any."

"I won't rest till I've seen you in the lockup."

"Very well. You know where I live, and can have me arrested if you want to."

Tom turned on his heel and walked away.

"I wish I hadn't hit the fellow," he soliloquized, "but he provoked me too much. I'll go home and see what comes of it."

On his way he met Alfred Hudson, breathless and excited.

“Oh, Tom!” he said, “I’m so sorry.”

“What for?” asked Tom, puzzled.

“Didn’t you know that there was a warrant out for your arrest?”

“What! so soon?” ejaculated Tom, thinking that the charge was assault and battery on Clarence Kent.

Alfred looked puzzled.

“Were you expecting to be arrested, then?” he asked.

“I thought Clarence might try to get me arrested.”

“Clarence? It isn’t Clarence. It is Mr. Thatcher.”

“Mr. Thatcher!” repeated Tom, his heart giving a great bound. “Why should he have me arrested?”

“He charges you with stealing his wallet, containing a hundred dollars.”

“Oh! is that all?” asked Tom, looking relieved.

“Is that all? Isn’t it enough?”

“Yes; but the charge is absurd.”

“I am sure you didn’t do it, but I hope you

will be able to prove it. Squire Kent says things look bad for you."

"I shan't trouble myself. I didn't steal the money any more than you did."

"But the money was in ten-dollar bills, and you have been spending ten-dollar bills pretty freely to day."

"That is true, but there are other ten-dollar bills in the world besides those in Mr. Thatcher's wallet."

"Then you can tell where you got the money?"

"Yes."

"I am glad of it, Tom."

"Surely, Alfred, you didn't think I had stolen the money?"

"No ; but I thought you might have found the wallet and spent some of the money."

"That would be dishonest."

Alfred looked pleased, for he had a genuine regard for Tom, and did not like to think of his getting into trouble.

"Then you think you can get off?" he said.

"I am sure of it."

"Here is Constable Staples coming. I think he is after you."

Tom flushed up, for it was not pleasant to think

of being arrested, but he stood still, and waited for the constable to come up.

"Tom," said the officer, in a tone of regret, "I've got a warrant for your arrest, and it's my duty to serve it, though I hate to."

"I don't blame you, Mr. Staples. I know you are my friend. Do you want me to go with you?"

"Yes, Tom, I'm afraid you will have to."

"All right, Mr. Staples. Alfred, will you go round and tell mother? When she hears what I am arrested for, she will understand that there's nothing to be troubled about."

"I'll tell her, Tom," said Alfred, in a tone of sympathy.

"Do you feel sure of clearing yourself?" asked the constable.

"Yes," answered Tom, smiling. "Still, I can't say I enjoy being arrested."

As Tom walked along the street in company with Constable Staples, he encountered Clarence Kent. He would rather have met any one else. He bit his lips as he noticed the triumphant smile of his enemy.

"I see you are in good company," said Clarence.

"Yes," answered Tom calmly. "Constable Staples and I are old friends."

He drew out a handkerchief from his pocket, and in so doing a note dropped unobserved upon the ground. Clarence stooped swiftly and picked it up. As he scanned it eagerly, his face lighted up with exultation.

“Now he won’t be able to prove his innocence!” he soliloquized. “Tom Turner, you’re in a bad box.”

CHAPTER XI.

A SERIOUS LOSS.

SQUIRE KENT had a small office on the same lot with his dwelling-house. He held a commission as trial justice, and small cases were brought before him.

Constable Staples entered the office with Tom at his side. He found the squire sitting at a desk in the lower part of the room.

He looked up as the two entered.

"Well, constable," he said, "have you any business with me?"

"Yes, squire, I am sorry to say I have. Tom Turner is charged by Mr. Thatcher with stealing or misappropriating a wallet of his containing one hundred dollars in ten-dollar bills."

"Mr. Thatcher must be present to press the charge."

"He said he would be here at four o'clock."

"It is ten minutes after four now. Will you look out and see if he is coming?"

"I don't see him," said the constable, shading his eyes and looking up the street.

"I will wait till half-past four. If he is not here then, I shall adjourn the case till to-morrow morning."

Clarence Kent entered the office at this moment, and heard his father's words.

"I'll run round and tell uncle to come," he said, with alacrity.

Squire Kent was somewhat surprised at the obliging spirit manifested by Clarence. It was certainly unusual.

"Very well!" he said. "Don't loiter on the way."

If he had known how anxious Clarence was to see Tom convicted of theft, he would not have found this admonition necessary.

Clarence ran all the way, and entered his uncle's store out of breath.

"Uncle John," he said, "you're wanted right off."

"Where am I wanted?"

"Father wants you to come right over to Tom Turner's trial."

John Thatcher knit his brows.

"I don't see how I can come over just now. I am very busy," he said.

"But," said Clarence, "you don't want Tom to get off, do you?"

"It can be deferred till to-morrow morning," said Thatcher.

"Tom will be running away."

"No; the constable can keep him in charge," said Thatcher. "He won't have any chance."

On the whole, this seemed satisfactory to Clarence. Tom would be under arrest, and this would humiliate him.

"All right!" he said. "I'll go and tell father."

He returned to the office with this message.

"Very well," said the squire. "You can bring the prisoner round to-morrow at nine in the forenoon."

"I suppose," said Clarence eagerly, "he'll be put in the lockup over night."

Squire Kent looked doubtful.

"What do you think, constable?" he asked.

"I will be responsible for Tom's appearance," said the constable.

"Very well!"

"Clarence Kent doesn't seem to be a friend of yours, Tom," said Staples, as he left the court room with his young charge.

"No; he hates me, I think."

"Have you any particular desire to spend the

night in the lockup?" asked the constable, smiling.

"I should be terribly mortified if I had to."

"I don't mean to have you. I'll go over to your mother's and will explain matters to her. Then perhaps it will be well for you to come over and spend the night at my house. Arthur will be glad to have you sleep with him."

"Thank you, Mr. Staples; it will be the very nicest prison you could think of for me."

"By the way, Tom what sort of a defense have you? I am your friend, even if I have arrested you. Can you account for the ten-dollar bills which you have spent?"

"Of course I can."

"I am glad of that. Do you mind telling me where you got them?"

Upon this Tom told about his rescue of Laura Scott from a runaway horse, and of the sealed envelope which the judge had given him.

The constable brightened up.

"This is very important, and will clear you," he said. "I suppose you have the letter?"

"Yes; I will show it to you."

Thereupon Tom dived into his pocket, expecting to produce the letter, but he was disappointed. His pocket was empty.

"I can't find it," he said, with a blank expression.

"Can't find the letter? That is bad. When did you have it last?"

"Two hours ago it was in my pocket, for I read it over."

"Where can it be?"

"I don't know."

"No one has had a chance to take it?"

"No."

"Do you keep your handkerchief in the same pocket?"

"Yes."

"Then you must have taken it out, and flipped out the letter at the same time. That is unfortunate. It complicates matters."

"Judge Scott would confirm my story, if applied to."

"But, unfortunately, we can't get his testimony in time. Your trial is to come off to-morrow morning at nine."

For the first time Tom became anxious.

"The letter must have dropped in the street somewhere."

"If addressed to you, it may be returned by the one finding it. But of course there is an uncertainty about this."

"I don't know when such a thing happened to me before," said Tom, in evident perturbation.

"If I could only see the judge," said the constable slowly, "we could fix it."

"Can't we telegraph to him?"

"Yes, we can do that. I will attend to it myself."

"I shall be much obliged to you."

The constable accompanied Tom to the house of his mother, and the matter was explained to her. Naturally she was much disturbed.

"It'll all come right, Mrs. Turner," said the constable. "Don't worry. The personal evidence of Judge Scott will be quite as good as the letter. I propose to telegraph him at once, and will place his reply in evidence to-morrow. Meanwhile I shall invite Tom to spend the night at my house as company for Arthur."

"Thank you, Mr. Staples," said Mrs. Turner, not suspecting that Tom was really a prisoner, though styled a guest. At seven o'clock Tom went over to the constable's house, and he and Arthur, a boy of ten, were soon pleasantly engaged in a fireside game.

At eight o'clock Constable Staples entered the house, looking a little disturbed.

“Well,” he said. “I have had an answer to my telegram.”

“Then it’s all right.”

“No. Here is the telegram.”

“TO THOMAS STAPLES, HILLSBORO.

“Papa is out of town. Will show him your telegram on his return.

“LAURA SCOTT.”

“Everything seems to be working against me,” said Tom soberly.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PLOT AGAINST TOM.

ALMOST every boy has an intimate friend. Clarence was no exception to the rule. His chum and almost inseparable companion was Dan Otis, who lived in a small house just outside the village. Dan's father was a carpenter, rather inclined to be shiftless, and therefore poor. It was a matter of surprise to some that Clarence should have overlooked the difference in social position, and keep company with a poor boy.

There were two reasons for this. Boys of his own position (he wouldn't admit that there were any quite his equal in Hillsboro) didn't care for his company. Dan was always ready to flatter him, and do his bidding. He looked up to Clarence as a superior being, and submitted to be snubbed and ordered about, and in many ways made himself convenient and agreeable to the richer boy. For this reason the squire's son was willing to keep company with him.

After Clarence left his father's office, finding the case adjourned, he stopped in to see Dan.

"Well, Dan, have you heard the news?" he asked.

"No ; what is it ?"

"Tom Turner has stolen a hundred dollars from Uncle John Thatcher."

"Tom Turner stolen money !" ejaculated Dan, his mouth and eyes wide open.

"Of course. Why not ?"

"I thought Tom was a model boy."

"I never thought so," said Clarence, with emphasis.

"At any rate, I didn't think he would steal."

"It's just these boys who pretend to be so good that will steal, and do worse things. Tom's taken in almost everybody, but he hasn't taken in me. I saw through him long ago."

"Tell me how it happened."

"You see Uncle Thatcher had a hundred dollars in his wallet, all in ten-dollar bills. They suddenly disappeared."

"That don't make out that Tom took them."

"What do you say to this ? Yesterday Tom paid out three ten-dollar bills—two to my father for rent, and one to the grocer for groceries. Looks kind of suspicious, doesn't it ?"

"That's so. I wouldn't have believed it if you hadn't told me. I would have thought of any boy's doing it rather than Tom."

"That's because you were deceived in him."

"He might have got the money from some one else."

"Don't be foolish! Where could Tom Turner get three ten-dollar bills? You don't seem to have common sense, Dan Otis."

"What's going to be done about it?" asked Dan after a pause.

"I'll tell you what's going to be done. He was arrested this afternoon by Constable Staples on a charge of theft, and taken before my father for trial."

"How did the trial come out? Was he found guilty?"

"The case is postponed till to-morrow, because Uncle John was too busy to appear against him. It will come off to-morrow morning at nine o'clock."

"What will be done with him if he is found guilty?" asked Dan thoughtfully.

"You can guess," replied Clarence significantly.

"Will he be sent to prison?"

"Of course."

"I shall be awfully sorry."

"Why should you be?" demanded Clarence sharply. "He isn't a particular friend of yours, is he?"

"No, but I think he is a good fellow."

"Look here, Dan Otis," said Clarence imperiously, thinking it necessary to quell at once all disaffection, "I want you to understand that if you are his friend you can't be mine."

"Can't a boy have more than one friend?" returned Dan with unusual spirit.

"I don't say that. I only say that if you choose to be friends with Tom Turner, you can't be my friend."

"Why?"

"Because he and I are enemies."

"Has he ever done you any harm?"

"Never mind! I don't choose to tell my private affairs. All I've got to say is, that you can choose between us. If you think it's for your interest to desert me for Tom you may."

"I don't intend to, but all the same I shall be sorry if Tom has to go to prison."

"Then he shouldn't steal."

Dan did not reply. He felt that the relations between himself and Clarence were already somewhat strained, and it would be the part of prudence to drop the subject.

They made arrangements to go off on a hunting expedition the next day. Clarence had a gun which he would now and then allow Dan to use. Dan was much the better marksman, but finding that if he were too successful Clarence became angry, he managed sometimes to miss when he might have hit the object fired at.

"When shall we go?" asked Dan.

"Say about eleven o'clock, or perhaps ten."

"It would be better to go earlier."

"That's true, but I want to be at Tom Turner's trial."

"I thought you didn't feel any interest in him."

"I don't feel any friendly interest in him, but I want to see him found guilty," and a smile of gratification lighted up the face of Clarence.

Dan looked grave. He was not a model boy, but on the other hand he could not understand why Clarence could feel such a bitter animosity against Tom.

"All right!" he said after a pause. "I think I will go to Tom's trial myself. But I hope he will get off."

"Look out, Dan Otis! If you sympathize with my enemy I shall give you up as a friend."

"I can't help it if you do. I've got nothing

against Tom, and though we are not intimate friends I wish him well."

Clarence did not at all like this speech, but he saw that it would not do to venture too far with Dan. He found the latter a very convenient friend and follower, and did not care to give him up.

"Well," he said shortly, "we will meet at the trial then."

Clarence did not stay long after this. After he left, Dan's attention was drawn to a piece of folded paper which Clarence must have dropped. He picked it up, and his face lighted up with joy and excitement.

"Tom Turner isn't a thief after all!" he said, "and Clarence knew it all the time. Yes, *I will be at the trial!*"

CHAPTER XIII.

TOM'S TRIAL.

THE cases held before Squire Kent usually attracted few spectators, but when the hour came for Tom's trial the little office was crowded. Tom was well known and popular, and his reputation was so good that the charge against him excited the greatest surprise.

"You don't really think that Tom Turner took your money, Mr. Thatcher?" said old Noah Stokes, a white-haired patriarch of eighty.

"Why shouldn't I? Hasn't he been found red-handed with the evidence of his crime in his possession?"

"What does that mean?"

"It means that my money was all in ten-dollar bills, and the prisoner passed three ten-dollar bills yesterday, as I can prove by the people he paid them to. Doesn't that look suspicious, hey?"

"It does look bad, that's a fact, but I've knowed Tom ever since he was a baby, ay, and I knew

his father before him, and his grandfather and I used to sit in the same seat in school."

"All very interesting, no doubt!" sneered John Thatcher, "but it doesn't prove that Tom didn't take the money."

"I know that, but it's a good stock for three generations, and I won't believe that Tom has become a thief."

"Perhaps you won't, but if there's legal proof of it he'll have to go to prison just the same."

"You don't mean to say you'll send Tom to prison," faltered the old man in pained surprise.

"It's the best place for him. Maybe it'll prevent his stealing again."

"Look here, Mr. Thatcher, I'm a poor man, but I'll make up to you—in time—whatever Tom's spent of the money, if so be as he has really taken it, if you'll let up on him, and not send him to prison."

"That's very kind of you, but it isn't right that the innocent should suffer. Besides, I want the boy punished for whatever he has done. It will be the best thing for him in the end."

At this moment Tom entered the office with Constable Staples. He was unusually grave, and there was a look of anxiety on his face, but he met the gaze of his friends without flinching.

"That isn't the face of a guilty boy," said old Noah Stokes, as he glanced eagerly in the face of his old schoolmate's grandson.

"How are ye, Tom?" he said, pressing close to our hero, and holding out his hand.

"Well in health, Mr. Stokes," answered Tom, smiling faintly, "but I don't like the position I am in."

"It's a shame," said old Noah earnestly. "I was just tellin' Mr. Thatcher that you wouldn't steal."

"No, Mr. Stokes, I am not a thief," said Tom proudly. "I never took the value of a cent that didn't belong to me."

"I said so!" said the old man triumphantly, striking the floor with his cane. "I knowed the grandson of my old friend Ben Turner wouldn't disgrace his name by stealin'."

At this moment Squire Kent entered the office, and pressing through the crowd took his seat behind the table.

"Order in the court!" was proclaimed, and business commenced.

"Constable Staples, what case is there before the court?"

"Tom Turner is charged with stealing a wallet belonging to Mr. Thatcher."

“ Mr. Thatcher, do you appear against Thomas Turner ? ”

“ Yes, sir ; the boy has stolen a hundred dollars belonging to me—a sum I can ill afford to lose.”

“ That is, you charge him with the theft. Did you see him take the money ? ”

“ No.”

“ Have you any witnesses who saw him take it ? ”

“ No, but you know yourself that he was paying away ten-dollar bills yesterday. My money was in ten-dollar bills.”

“ Wait, we must proceed regularly. I will swear you, and you can testify to those facts formally.”

John Thatcher did so.

First, however, Tom was asked if he was guilty, or not guilty, and in a clear ringing voice he answered : “ Not guilty ! ”

“ What have you to say, Thomas ? ” asked Squire Kent. “ Do you admit paying away three ten dollar-bills yesterday ? ”

“ Yes, sir.”

“ Were these bills formerly the property of John Thatcher ? ”

“ No, sir.”

“Are you prepared to tell the court where you got them?”

“Yes, sir; they were paid me by Judge Scott of Scranton.”

“Have you any evidence proving this?”

“I had a letter from Judge Scott accompanying the money.”

“If you can produce this letter it will go far to proving your innocence.”

“I can't produce it, sir, for I have lost it.”

Tom's friends looked blank, and they heard a derisive laugh from one corner of the office. It proceeded from Clarence Kent.

CHAPTER XIV.

HOW THE TRIAL ENDED.

"YOUR story is a very singular one," said Squire Kent. "How and where did you lose this important letter?"

"I can't tell you, sir, exactly. I missed it yesterday on returning from a walk. I think I must have dropped it from my pocket when I took out my handkerchief."

"In that case it would have been found. I hardly think I can give credence to your account of the way the money came into your hands. Judge Scott is not a man to give so large a sum to a boy like you."

"I stopped a runaway team containing his daughter and little boy. It was for this he gave me the money."

"If Judge Scott himself would testify that he gave you the money that would be sufficient. Have you taken any means to secure his evidence?"

“ Yes, sir, I had a telegram sent to him last evening.”

“ Did you receive an answer ? ”

“ Yes, sir ; here it is.”

Tom took from his pocket Laura Scott's telegram.

“ Humph ! this is something, but the original letter would be better. If you cannot produce it I am afraid I must bind you over for trial at the county court.”

A gratified smile appeared on the face of Clarence. Things were coming out as he expected and wished.

A few feet from him sat Dan Otis. Dan understood the situation and felt very uneasy. He saw that Clarence had endeavored to suppress the letter in order to convict Tom, and he felt disgusted by the meanness and malignity of his friend. Should he make it known that he had the letter ? If he did, Clarence would never forgive him. If he did not, poor Tom would be unable to escape from his trouble, and he would be unable to forgive himself.

“ Dang it all ! ” soliloquized Dan. “ I'll tell and take the risk.”

He held up his hand, as if he were at school, and called out, “ Squire Kent.”

The squire frowned, and turning his head toward Dan, said, "Silence, boy, or you will be put out of the room."

"But I've got the letter," said Dan.

"What letter?"

"The letter you've been talking about—Judge Scott's letter."

There was a buzz of excitement in the court room, and all eyes were centered on Dan. Clarence turned pale, and feeling hurriedly in his pocket ascertained his loss for the first time.

"Let the boy come forward!"

Way was made for Dan to pass through the crowd, and he pressed forward till he stood next to Tom. The latter gave him a quick but silent look of gratitude which quite repaid Dan for his sacrifice.

"Pass up the letter."

Dan did so, and Squire Kent, adjusting his spectacles, looked it over.

"I know the judge's handwriting," he said after a pause, during which you might have heard a pin drop, "and identify this letter as his. I am bound to say that it confirms the boy's story."

There was a little murmur of applause in which it is hardly necessary to say that Clarence did not join.

“ Was the fifty dollars spoken of by Judge Scott in ten-dollar bills ? ” he asked.

“ Yes, sir.”

“ How many of these did you spend ? ”

“ Three.”

“ Have you the other two ? ”

“ Yes, sir.”

“ Can you show them ? ”

Tom drew two tens from his pocket.

“ Where’s the other five ? ” asked John Thatcher in a querulous voice.

“ These were all I had,” said Tom quietly.

“ I don’t believe it.”

“ I cannot tolerate such interruptions,” said Squire Kent in a dignified tone.

“ What I want is justice,” retorted Thatcher.

“ You shall have it, but I cannot hold this boy, against whom there is absolutely no case. Thomas Turner, you are discharged.”

“ Three cheers for Tom Turner ! ” proposed an enthusiastic friend.

The cheers were given, and even Squire Kent did not rebuke the indecorum. In truth he was glad that the case against Tom had failed, for a selfish reason, as otherwise he might have felt compelled to surrender the twenty dollars which had been paid him.

The unexpected result pleased all but two persons. These were John Thatcher and Clarence Kent.

"Am I to lose my money?" asked Thatcher, pressing up to his brother-in-law, the squire.

"I hope not, John."

"Then why did you discharge the boy?"

"Because he had no more to do with the loss than you or I."

"You allowed yourself to be imposed upon by his story."

"Pardon me," said the squire indignantly, "I don't require any instruction about the discharge of my duties. You will have to look elsewhere for your money."

As John Thatcher left the office Clarence joined him.

"Uncle John," he said, "it's too bad for that boy to get off. I believe he stole the money after all."

"So do I. Your father ruled dead against me, and I his own brother-in-law," added Thatcher bitterly.

"I took your part, Uncle John."

"Thank you, Clarence. If the case had come before you, I might have obtained justice."

"I wish it had come before me; I'd have sent that Tom Turner to prison."

“He’ll get there yet. He won’t always have such an indulgent judge.”

At the next corner Clarence parted from his uncle. A few steps farther on he overtook Dan Otis—Dan, through whose evidence Tom had escaped. If there was any one that Clarence hated at that moment it was Dan. He had a grudge against him, and he meant to have it out with him.

“Dan,” he called.

Dan turned. He saw the storm on his friend’s brow, and nerved himself to meet his anticipated anger. He had made up his mind to break with Clarence, if necessary. Thinking over their relations he failed to see that he derived much advantage from the connection. He had felt flattered by the notice of the squire’s son, and this, more than anything else, had made him desirous of keeping up the intimacy.

“Well?” he said interrogatively.

“Where did you get that letter?”

“I found it.”

“I dropped it in your yard.”

“So I supposed.”

“Than why didn’t you return it to me?”

“It belonged to Tom Turner,” answered Dan boldly. “It didn’t belong to you.”

"At any rate it was in my possession. It was for me to return it."

"But you wouldn't have done it."

"How do you know?"

"You wanted to send Tom to prison, and insisted that he was guilty, though you had the evidence of his innocence in your pocket."

"Look here, Dan Otis, where did you get all that law talk?"

"Is it law talk? At any rate I mean it."

"I won't be friends with you any more if you turn against me that way."

"What do you call turning against you?"

"Keeping secret that you had the letter."

"Would you have handed it to your father?"

"I don't choose to tell."

"I know you wouldn't and that would have been about as mean a thing as you could do."

Clarence was startled at this bold condemnation from his ally and sycophant.

"How dare you talk so to me?" he demanded.

"There is no daring about it. When I was friends with you, Clarence Kent, I didn't know how mean you were."

"I won't speak to you again," gasped Clarence, the veins on his forehead swelling.

"I would rather you wouldn't."

“And I have a good mind to flog you.”

“Come on !” exclaimed Don, undaunted.

“I don’t care to do it in the street. I don’t want to get into a street disturbance.”

“Come into the woods then. I’ll show you a bully place where no one will interfere with us.”

Clarence cooled down when he saw how readily his challenge was accepted.

“I don’t want to fight with a boy like you, any way.”

“Just as you like.”

Clarence was becoming more and more disgusted. He turned away abruptly, and not caring to meet any one, struck into the fields and walked on till he came to a small cabin where lived a poor German woman with a demented son.

Fritz, a tall, ungainly boy of fourteen, shambling up to Clarence, and said shyly, “If you’ll give me a cent, I’ll show you what I’ve found.”

“All right ! Here’s the cent.”

Fritz went to the corner of the backyard and began to probe the earth with his fingers. Clarence looked on curiously, but he didn’t dream of what Fritz had concealed. His heart gave a quick bound when the boy drew out a discolored wallet, which he recognized at once as his uncle’s.

CHAPTER XV.

A STRANGE DISCOVERY.

CLARENCE lost no time in opening the wallet. Might it not still contain the money? His brain reeled as he thought of the dazzling possibility. If any one else but Fritz had found it there would be little chance of the money remaining intact, but the poor demented boy knew nothing of bank bills or their value.

With trembling fingers Clarence opened the wallet and looked inside. There was a thick roll of bills, but whether the whole sum was there or not he could not tell. He did not care to count them in the presence of Fritz, so he hastily thrust the wallet into his pocket, and, turning to the boy, asked, "Where did you find it, Fritz?"

"In the road," answered Fritz.

"Where?"

Fritz in his imperfect way indicated a spot about quarter of a mile from Mr. Thatcher's store.

"Fritz, you are a good boy."

"Then give me another cent," said the boy with a cunning leer.

"All right, Fritz! Here's a bright cent."

Clarence was in a liberal mood, and he handed Fritz a bright cent recently coined. The demented boy was delighted with the gift.

"You needn't tell anybody about this," said Clarence.

"Why not?"

"Because they would take the pennies away from you."

"All right! Fritz won't tell," said the boy, nodding.

"And don't tell any one who gave you the pennies."

"I won't," answered Fritz with a cunning look in his eyes.

"There, I've made it all safe with him," thought Clarence, as he walked thoughtfully away.

His mind was in a tumult, and his brain was busy with the thought that he had actually in his possession a hundred dollars—that is, if nothing had been taken. What was he to do with it? Of course, to a thoroughly honest boy there would have been but one answer to this question. It was his duty to return it to his uncle untouched.

If Clarence had been sure of a liberal reward he might have done so, but he knew that John Thatcher was a very close man and would probably not give him even a penny.

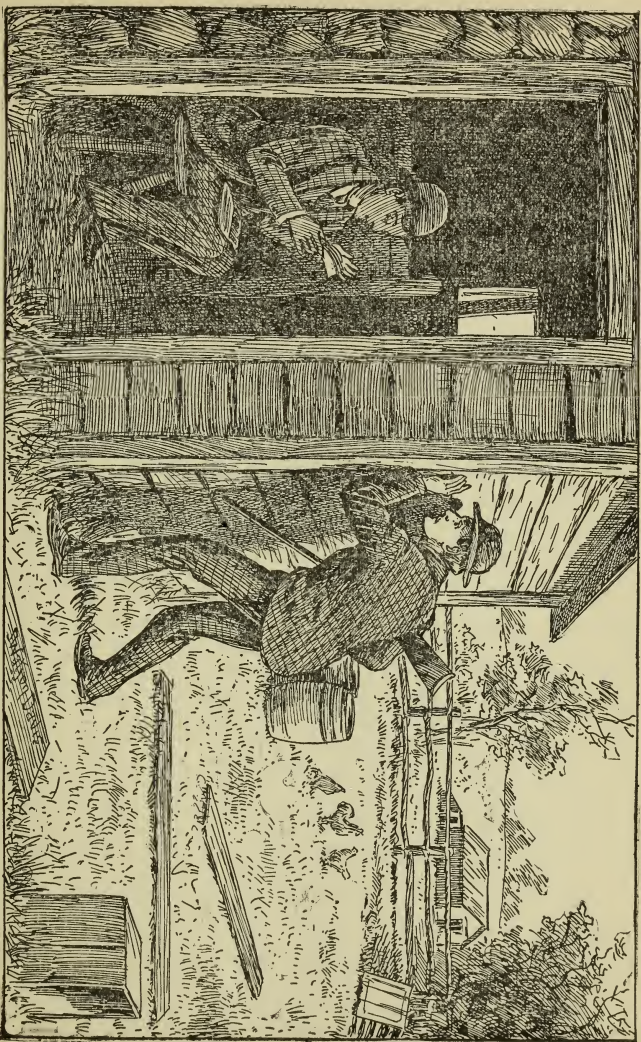
"Ten dollars is the least he could decently give me," thought Clarence. But he knew very well there was no chance of this.

Then again he might withhold ten dollars for his own services, but his uncle was of a suspicious nature, and would immediately suspect where the money had gone. A watch would be set upon him, and he would find it quite impossible to spend the money.

Clarence walked slowly across the fields. He was longing for a chance to count the bills, and ascertain whether there were really a hundred dollars in the roll. But he could not venture to do this until he was in a safe place, secure from interruption. As he was considering where to find this spot, his eyes rested upon a dismantled barn belonging to a farmhouse which had been burned to the ground the year previous and never rebuilt. It was twenty rods away, but he didn't mind the distance.

"No one ever comes there," he soliloquized. "It will be just the right place."

He reached the barn, and entering sat down



Bob put his eye to a crevice in the side of the barn and saw Clarence counting the bills.—Page 115.

on a milking stool which had been left behind. Then he drew out the wallet and unrolled the bills. He did not notice that on the other side of the barn was a boy already mentioned in this story—Bob Ainsworth—a friend of Tom Turner. Bob had a gun over his shoulder, and was on a hunting expedition.

As he saw Clarence approaching the barn he said to himself, “What’s up now, I wonder? What brings Clarence Kent to this old place?”

Bob put his eye to a crevice in the side of the barn, and secured a good view of the occupant.

When the latter drew out the wallet and began to count the bills, Bob’s eyes distended with surprise and excitement.

“So Clarence was the thief after all!” he said to himself. “And he was so active in accusing Tom Turner. That boy is about as mean as they make ’em.”

Quite unaware that there was any one within hearing, Clarence counted aloud: “Ten, twenty, thirty, forty—. Yes, the whole ten bills are there. This is what I call a stroke of luck.”

One thing puzzled Bob. Why should Clarence have any doubt that all the bills were in the wallet? It was strange, if he stole or found the wallet, that he had not ascertained this before.

"I wish I knew what to do," said Clarence, still aloud. "If I return the wallet to Uncle John I won't get a cent, although he did offer a reward. He'll think I ought not to have anything because I am his nephew, but I don't do business on those terms. If I could only keep the whole," and Clarence drew a long breath, "I would have plenty of money for the rest of the year. Father only gives me fifty cents a week to spend, and that is next to nothing. What can a fellow do with fifty cents?"

"He couldn't have stolen it after all," thought Bob, "or he wouldn't talk of returning it. He wants to keep it, evidently. I wonder what he'll decide to do?"

"Then there's another thing I might do," continued Clarence in his soliloquy. "Tom Turner's got off, but I might throw suspicion on him again by taking half the money and leaving half in the wallet, and then return it to Uncle John. Tom owns up to having fifty dollars, and that would be just the amount lost. By gum, that's a good idea. Then I should have fifty dollars to spend. I could be very careful about changing the bills, so as not to draw suspicion. I think I'll do it."

"What a mean rascal that Clarence is!" thought Bob with disgust. "He hopes to get

Tom in trouble, though he knows he is innocent. But I'll put a spoke in his wheel. Thanks to a pretty sharp pair of ears, I have found out all about his scheme. So he wants to keep fifty dollars himself and throw suspicion on Tom. We'll see how he makes out."

An expression of satisfaction lighted up Clarence's face. His scheme seemed to him an admirable one. He withdrew five bills from the roll and put them in his inside vest pocket. Then he carefully replaced the others and restored the wallet to his coat pocket.

"Now I'll go and see Uncle John," he said.

He left the barn, without discovering that there had been an eye and ear witness to his proceedings.

Bob waited till Clarence was well on his way to the village, and then, giving up all thoughts of hunting, went over to the cottage of Mrs. Turner to see Tom and apprise him of the new plot against him.

Clarence walked with rapid steps to his uncle's store.

Mr. Thatcher was in a bad humor. There seemed small chance of his recovering his money. Tom had been acquitted, and there was absolutely no evidence against any one else. The loss of

a hundred dollars was no small one to a man of moderate means. When it is considered also that John Thatcher was excessively close and fond of money, it may well be imagined that he was very unhappy.

"People may say what they like, neighbor Pearson," said he to a customer, "I believe that Tom Turner took my money."

"But it was shown that Tom got his money elsewhere," said the neighbor.

"What proof is there of it?"

"The letter written by Judge Scott."

"Has Judge Scott owned up to writing the letter?"

"Why, no."

"And he won't, take my word for it."

"How then do you account for it?"

"The boy forged it."

"That's a very serious accusation, Mr. Thatcher."

"But I mean it all the same. Think for a moment how improbable it is that a gentleman like Judge Scott, who is a sensible man, would give such a sum to Tom Turner."

"You are making out Tom to be a very unprincipled character."

"And so he is."

“Look here,” said Mr. Pearson warmly, “I’ve known Tom ever since he wore dresses, and I’ve never known him guilty of a mean or dishonest action.”

“O, you are prejudiced in his favor. There must always be a beginning. The boy’s sly. That’s why you and all the rest believe him. I tell you it’s pretty hard on me to lose a hundred dollars. I shall never see my wallet again.”

“Yes you will, Uncle John,” said Clarence, entering the store, “for here it is.”

CHAPTER XVI.

TOM'S FINAL VINDICATION.

"WHERE did you get it?" asked the store-keeper, his surprise equal to his delight.

"Under a bush by the roadside."

"Where?"

"Not far from Tom Turner's house," answered Clarence significantly.

"Is the money in it?" asked Thatcher apprehensively.

"Part of it."

"Let me see!"

The merchant seized the wallet and opened it hurriedly. He counted the bills, and an expression of disappointment and anger swept over his face.

"Half of the money is gone!" he said. "Here are only fifty dollars."

"That's so," responded Clarence nonchalantly. "That's the way I made it."

"But what has become of the rest?" queried Mr. Thatcher suspiciously.

"I don't know," answered Clarence slowly. "It was fifty dollars that Tom Turner claimed to have received from Judge Scott, wasn't it?"

"That explains it!" exclaimed John Thatcher, pounding the desk with his hand. "That little rascal has taken the money after all, but he has been sly enough to take only part and throw the rest away."

"It looks like it," assented Clarence.

"I'll have the young scoundrel arrested again," said Thatcher, angrily. "We'll see if he'll get off after this discovery."

"It strikes me you will make a fool of yourself, Mr. Thatcher, if you persecute the boy any more," interposed Mr. Pearson. "This discovery, as you call it, is no evidence against him."

"But fifty dollars are missing."

"What of that? If the boy had taken it, he wouldn't have owned up to having fifty dollars in his possession. If he were going to keep a part he would keep the whole."

"He didn't dare to."

"Besides, there is Judge Scott's letter to show that he really gave the boy fifty dollars."

"Neighbor Pearson," said Thatcher derisively, "are you really simple enough to believe that Judge Scott wrote that letter?"

"Yes, I am."

"Well, I ain't," said Thatcher emphatically.

"Who did write it then?"

"The boy wrote it himself."

"But your brother-in-law, Squire Kent, recognized Scott's handwriting."

"Writing is imitated easily," responded Thatcher doggedly.

"Seems to me you are making out the boy one of the craftiest rascals on record, or one of the greatest simpletons."

"How's that?"

"What good would it do him to imitate Judge Scott's handwriting when the judge lives so near, and would be sure to discover it?"

"He'll disavow it yet. Besides rogues always do manage to outwit themselves, even the smartest."

"I agree to that, and I'm glad it's true. But Tom Turner is neither a rogue nor a simpleton, as you will find out in time."

"Uncle John," said Clarence, who had been sitting on a barrel listening with attention to the conversation, "didn't you offer a reward for the return of the wallet?"

"Yes, and the money in it."

"How much are you going to give me?"

"Just find that other fifty dollars and I'll give you a reward."

"How much?"

"A dollar," answered Thatcher cautiously.

"Just as I thought," Clarence said to himself.

"He's too stingy to live."

"Do you know where the rest of the money is?" asked the uncle eagerly.

"Of course not, unless it's in Tom Turner's pockets. But don't you think I ought to get something for the fifty dollars I found?"

"How can I afford to pay a reward when I've lost fifty dollars already?" said Thatcher peevishly.

"Then all I can say is, it's lucky I am honest."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that it isn't much encouragement to return the wallet when I might have kept the fifty dollars and no one been the wiser."

"I'm surprised at you, Clarence. Aren't you my nephew?"

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Then you ought to be glad to give back my money without wanting a reward for it."

"That isn't business," said Clarence bluntly.

"You ought to give me a greater reward on account of the relationship."

Somehow this didn't seem to impress Mr. Thatcher as conclusive reasoning. But he found it hard to argue with his nephew.

"Look here, Clarence," he said, "I can't afford to give any reward till I've got back all the money. Maybe the rest of the bills slipped out on the ground. Just go and hunt for them, and if you find them, I'll see what I can do for you. I'll give you—yes, I'll give you a dollar and a half."

Clarence shrugged his shoulders.

"Just send that offer to Tom Turner," he said. "It may induce him to fork over."

"It's a shame that that Turner boy should rob me," fumed John Thatcher. "There must be a law to reach him. If I could only see the squire——"

At this moment Squire Kent entered the store.

"I met Clarence just outside," he said, "and he tells me you have found your wallet."

"Yes, but only half the money. Fifty dollars are missing."

"You are lucky to get so much back."

"I mean to get the whole back. I hope you'll admit now that you were wrong in discharging Tom Turner."

"Why should I admit it?"

"Because the money he claims to have received is the very sum I have lost."

"What does that prove?"

"That he has been spending my money, of course."

"It doesn't follow."

"I want you to make out another warrant for his arrest."

"I can't do it, John. It is clear that he obtained his money from another source."

"I don't believe a word of it, neither does Clarence. He seems to be more clear sighted than his father. He believes with me that Tom Turner has got the other fifty dollars."

"I don't in general consult Clarence in law matters," said the squire stiffly. "I don't propose to make a fool of myself by authorizing the arrest of the Turner boy when his only crime is receiving a present of fifty dollars from Judge Scott."

"So you believe that ridiculous story, do you?"

"I do."

"I gave you credit for more sense."

"John Thatcher, your loss seems to have made you mad."

"I am just as sane as you are, but I am not to be taken in by a thief."

"You seem to be imposing upon yourself. Let me dispel your illusion at once by saying that, as you chose to demur to my decision I telegraphed to Judge Scott an hour since to ascertain whether he gave the Turner boy fifty dollars."

"Well?"

"Here is his answer. Read for yourself."

John Thatcher took the telegraphic message and read.

"I gave Tom Turner fifty dollars. He is a good boy.

JAMES SCOTT."

"Perhaps you'll say this telegram is a forgery," continued the squire with sarcasm.

John Thatcher could not find a word to say at first.

"You seem very much taken up with that boy," he muttered after a pause.

"No, I'm not. I don't like him particularly, but as a magistrate I won't be bullied, even by you, into doing an act of injustice."

The squire walked off with head erect, feeling that he had won a victory, leaving his brother-in-law not in the best of humor.

Meanwhile Clarence took a solitary stroll, enjoying the consciousness of wealth. But this very wealth brought him embarrassment. He could not change a ten dollar-bill in the village without

exciting suspicion. The fact of his uncle's loss had been so bruited about, that it would be dangerous to let it be known that he had any bills of that denomination in his possession.

"I might as well have no money at all," he muttered in a tone of vexation.

If he could only slip over to New York—he had been there but once in his life—he would have no difficulty in changing the money there.

"Young gentleman, can I sell you any jewelry to-day—sleeve buttons, bosom studs, chains, rings, etc?"

Turning quickly Clarence saw that the man accosting him was a peddler, carrying a large square box which he proceeded to open, displaying a stock of jewelry, embracing the articles named and others.

This was the chance that Clarence desired.

"Yes," he said eagerly. "I will buy something if you can change a bill."

"Depends on how big the bill is," returned the peddler jocosely, "If it's a thousand dollar bill I shall have to pass."

"It's only a ten," said Clarence.

"I might manage that, if you buy an article worth a dollar."

"I'll look at some of your jewelry, then."

CHAPTER XVII.

TWO RIVAL CLAIMANTS.

THE jewelry, as might be supposed, was of the cheapest kind. If there was any gold about it, it was infinitesimal in quantity. Still it glittered and looked like the genuine article.

“Here are some sleeve buttons, of a new and novel pattern, exceedingly chaste,” said the peddler, producing a showy pair and holding them up with an admiring look.

“Yes, they are pretty,” said Clarence. “How much do you ask for them?”

“A dollar.”

Clarence, though not an expert in such matters, was inclined to think they were scarcely worth half the money. Still he did not care so much for the buttons as to change the bill.

“I guess I’ll take them,” he said. “Here is the money.”

The peddler scrutinized the bill closely. He saw that Clarence was anxious to change it, and it made him somewhat suspicious.

"This bill is good, of course," he said.

"Of course it is."

"It looks all right, but I am a poor man and can't afford to run any risk."

"If you are any judge of money you ought to know that it is good," said Clarence impatiently.

"I presume it is. Just give me your name, so that if it is wrong I may know whom to call upon to make it right."

Clarence hesitated. He saw at a flash that this would furnish evidence against him, if the peddler should ever make it known that he had paid him a ten-dollar bill. An inspiration came to him.

"My name is Tom Turner," he said.

"All right," returned the peddler unsuspectingly, noting it down in a little memorandum book which he carried.

He handed Clarence nine dollars in change, which the latter with great complacency put with the other bills in his inside vest pocket, reserving only one dollar for possible need.

"Are you going to remain long in town?" he asked.

"Depends on my luck. I think I shall leave before night."

"Thank Heaven for that!" inwardly ejaculated

Clarence. "The sooner you leave the better for me."

Clarence was too shrewd to display the sleeve buttons, as the sight of them might lead to embarrassing questions. He put them in his pocket and resumed his walk.

Meanwhile the peddler kept on his way, stopping here and there. He congratulated himself on his sale to Clarence, as he had received double the amount he usually asked for such articles.

"I'd like to meet another customer like that," he said to himself, "though I couldn't conveniently change another ten-dollar bill. I wonder whether the boy came by it honestly, though that doesn't concern me as long as the bill is good. Still I've got his name, in case of trouble. Tom Turner ! I mustn't forget that."

Presently he came to the dry goods store of John Thatcher. He did not usually go into stores, but saw a young man standing near the doorway and thought he might prove a customer.

"Can I sell you some jewelry?" he asked.

"If you have any diamond rings for ten cents I'll take one," was the jocular reply.

"Haven't any *first class* diamonds at that price. Let me show you some cuff buttons."

"I'll see what you've got."

As they stood near the front of the store, Mr. Thatcher, who chanced to be unoccupied, came forward and began to examine the stock.

"Here's a fine article," said the peddler. "I sold one just like it to a boy half an hour since."

"What did you get for it?"

"I'll sell it to you for seventy-five cents. I charged the boy a dollar because I had to change a ten-dollar bill for him."

"A ten-dollar bill?" gasped John Thatcher in excitement. "You don't know the boy's name, do you?"

"Yes, I do. I asked his name for fear the bill might not prove good."

"What was his name?"

"Tom Turner."

"Tom Turner!" ejaculated the merchant.

"And he gave you a ten-dollar bill?"

"Yes."

"Have you got the bill about you?"

"Yes."

"Let me see it."

"There isn't anything wrong about it, is there?" asked the peddler anxiously.

"Only that I've had five ten-dollar bills stolen from me," answered the merchant grimly.

"Here's the bill," said the peddler, drawing

out his wallet and extracting the note from the left hand compartment. "I gave the boy nine dollars in change."

John Thatcher took it in his hand and held it up to the light.

"It's mine!" he exclaimed triumphantly.

"How do you know?" demanded the peddler suspiciously. "One ten-dollar bill is very much like another. You can't say it's yours unless you remembered the number."

"I don't remember the number, but I do remember a mark I myself made on the reverse side in one corner. There it is, a small cross in violet ink."

"I see the cross, but your story may be made up. Why did you mark this bill and not the others? Of course it's easy when you've seen the mark to say you made it."

"I'll tell you. I had just bought a dozen bottles of violet ink, and I made this mark just to try it. I happened to have just taken in the money. That's the way it came about."

"Then you think the boy stole it?"

"Yes; why, the boy was tried for theft only yesterday, and discharged because they couldn't prove anything against him. I insisted all along that he had taken my money, though he told a

cock and bull story about getting it from Judge Scott of Scranton."

"The judge himself says that he gave him the money," said Mr. Pearson, who chanced to be present. "How do you get over that? You'll be charging the judge with stealing the money next."

"I'm not a fool, nor am I to be fooled!" said Mr. Thatcher sharply. "What I've said all along is coming out true, as you see. The judge may have given money to the boy, but he has stolen mine besides."

"It is very queer that he should steal when he was so well supplied with money already," objected Tom's advocate.

"You may talk as much as you like, Mr. Pearson. It don't controvert the evidence of this bill. I'm glad I've got back one of the stolen bills. That reduces my loss to forty dollars," and he made a motion to put the bill in the cash drawer.

"Hold on there!" said the peddler in excitement. "That ten-dollar bill is mine."

"So you lay claim to stolen property, do you? Do you know that the receiver is as bad as the thief?"

"The bill is mine. I took it for merchandise, and gave nine dollars in exchange for it."

"I don't care what you gave for it," returned John Thatcher. "I claim the bill as one of those that were stolen from me, and I have proved it by the mark I myself made upon it."

"I don't believe you made any mark on it at all," said the peddler angrily. "Who's to prove that you made any? You saw the mark, and it occurred to you to claim that you recognized it by that. You are not going to swindle me. That's altogether too thin."

"Do you mean to call me a swindler?" exclaimed John Thatcher, exasperated.

"Yes, I do. If you don't give me back my money I'll have you arrested."

"The man is right," said Mr. Pearson, quietly. "You have taken his money, claiming it as yours, with no other proof than your unsupported assertion—"

"But I tell you I know it's mine!" exclaimed the merchant wrathfully.

"And I can testify that you took it from the peddler," said Pearson. "You will find out that the law is against you."

"You don't mean to say that I can't take possession of what is my own?" asked Thatcher.

"It remains to be proved that it is yours."

"But there's the mark."

“ Any one of us might have claimed it on that ground,” retorted Mr Pearson.

“ But I made the mark—you didn’t.”

“ Did any one see you make the mark ? ”

“ N—no, but if I say so, it’s so.”

“ The law won’t take that view of it. This gentleman can ask for a warrant for your arrest.”

“ And you will stand by him ? ”

“ Yes. I know that the bill was once in his possession, and I don’t know that it was ever in yours.”

“ Is this the way you stand by your neighbor and townsman, Mr. Pearson ? This man is a stranger to you,” and Mr. Thatcher put on a deeply injured air.

“ That makes no difference. I will support the cause of justice.”

“ Look here, gentlemen,” said Mr. Ainsworth, whose son Bob has already been mentioned as a friend of Tom Turner, “ there’s one way to settle the matter, and only one.”

“ What is it ? ” asked Thatcher.

“ Send for Tom Turner, and see what he has to say about it.”

“ All right ! ” said Pearson. “ I’ll go and find Tom myself and bring him here.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

CLARENCE AT BAY.

It was twenty minutes before Mr. Pearson entered with Tom at his side.

When told by his friend that his presence was desired immediately at Mr. Thatcher's store he inquired, "What's up now, Mr. Pearson?"

"John Thatcher's got ten dollars on the brain," answered Pearson. "He learned that a boy has been buying some sleeve buttons from a peddler, and tendering a ten-dollar bill in change. Have you had any business transaction of that kind this morning?"

"No," answered Tom. "I have no money for sleeve buttons. I need shirts more."

"So I thought, but there's something very queer in the story. The boy who bought the buttons gave his name as Tom Turner."

"Then it's an impostor."

"I think the peddler told the story in good faith. He wouldn't have any object in mentioning your name unless it had really been given him."

"Some boy must have used my name."

"But what boy would have a ten-dollar bill? I forgot to tell you that the bill in question has been recognized by Mr. Thatcher as one of those he lost."

"How could he tell it from any other ten-dollar bill?"

"By a mark in violet ink on the reverse side."

"Then," said Tom, "there seems a chance of discovering the real thief. I am glad of that."

By this time they had reached the dry goods store.

As Tom entered, Mr. Thatcher eyed him with a look of vindictive malice.

"Aha!" he said. "Now we will find out the truth about the robbery. Tom Turner, you bought a pair of sleeve buttons of this man here, and paid for them with a ten-dollar bill stolen from me."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Thatcher, but you are entirely mistaken. I have bought no sleeve buttons, and of course I couldn't have paid for them with a ten-dollar or any other bill."

"You young liar!" exclaimed Thatcher vehemently. "Here is a man who will speedily convict you of falsehood."

Tom turned, and for the first time caught sight of the peddler.

"Do you say that I bought a pair of sleeve buttons of you?" demanded Tom indignantly.

"Is your name Tom Turner?"

"Yes."

"A boy calling himself Tom Turner bought sleeve buttons of me."

"Am I the boy?"

"No, *you are not.*"

John Thatcher's countenance fell. He had expected to convict Tom by the peddler's evidence, but his witness failed him.

"Look again!" he said sharply. "This boy is Tom Turner, and there is no other boy by that name in the village."

"I can't help that. *This is not the boy.*"

The bystanders looked at each other. Who, then, could the false Tom Turner be?

"Won't you describe the boy who gave his name as Tom Turner?" asked Mr. Pearson.

The peddler was about to do so, when Clarence, little suspecting the trouble that awaited him, walked into the store.

"I don't need to describe him," said the peddler, "for there he is."

Clarence stood as if petrified, his cheeks flush-

ing, for he saw that he was in a tight place. But he rapidly determined to brazen it out.

“What is all this about?” he asked nervously.

“Did you buy a pair of sleeve buttons of this gentleman this morning?” asked Mr. Pearson.

“Yes,” answered Clarence, after a pause.

“Did you pay for them with a ten-dollar bill?”

“Yes.”

John Thatcher listened in amazement. Could it be that his nephew—the son of Squire Kent—was the thief?

“Did you give your name as Tom Turner?” proceeded Mr. Pearson.

“Yes,” answered Clarence coolly. “I gave Tom’s name because I was acting as his agent.”

“What do you mean?” demanded Tom quickly.

“Tom asked me to buy a pair of sleeve buttons for him, and handed me a ten-dollar bill. Here is your change,” and turning to Tom he tendered him nine dollars in bills.

“Aha! we are coming to it!” ejaculated John Thatcher, rubbing his hands in delight. “Murder will out!”

Tom put his hands behind his back.

“I don’t know what you mean, Clarence,” he said. “That money is not mine, and I never asked

you to buy any sleeve buttons for me. I didn't know that there was any dealer in jewelry in town."

"That won't do!" shouted John Thatcher, pounding the counter with his fist. "You can't get off that way."

"And here are the sleeve buttons," continued Clarence, drawing them from his vest pocket. "Take them! They belong to you."

"They are not mine, and I shall not take them," said Tom angrily. "I see your object, offering them to me. You want to throw suspicion on me"

"I knew my nephew was an honest boy," said John Thatcher. "It stands to reason that he wouldn't give away a pair of sleeve buttons and nine dollars to a party who did not have a claim to them."

"I didn't know the money was stolen," said Clarence. "If I had I wouldn't have had anything to do with it."

"Of course you wouldn't," said Thatcher. "Why, Mr. Pearson, Clarence has already restored to me my wallet with half of the missing money."

"Where did you find it?" asked Tom abruptly.

"Not far from your house, under a bush," re-

plied Clarence significantly. "Fifty dollars were missing."

"Just the amount you pretended to have received from Judge Scott, Tom Turner," said John Thatcher pointedly.

"Perhaps you will be charging Judge Scott with taking your money next," said Tom boldly.

"I am no fool!" retorted Thatcher. "I can put two and two together. Mr. Pearson, your young friend is in a bad scrape."

"I don't see it," said Pearson calmly. "I may as well speak plainly, and say that I don't believe your nephew's story."

"About what?"

"About buying the sleeve buttons for Tom. From what I know of the two boys, I don't think Tom would be apt to appoint him as agent, nor do I think Clarence would care to act as such. Tom, did you know that there was a dealer in jewelry in town?"

"No, sir; not till I saw him here."

"Did this boy," proceeded Pearson, turning to the peddler, "say he was acting for another?"

"No."

"Did he ask at once to see sleeve buttons?"

"No; he seemed more desirous of changing his bill than anything else."

“That comes of being obliging,” said Clarence boldly.

“Where was I when I commissioned you to buy the sleeve buttons for me?” demanded Tom.

“Out in the street, near your house,” answered Clarence.

“And I then handed you the ten-dollar bill?”

“Yes; you said you wanted to get the bill changed, as it was hard to change it in the village.”

“I hear a good deal of news this afternoon,” said Tom quietly.

“And you’ll hear some more before long,” snarled Thatcher. “You’ve been playing a bold game, Tom Turner. I can give you credit for being an ingenious young rascal.”

“I don’t consider that very creditable, Mr. Thatcher.”

“Gentlemen, I leave it to you if there’s not evidence enough to warrant my applying for a fresh warrant for Tom Turner’s arrest,” said John Thatcher looking around the company.

“There is a boy here whom you would be warranted in having arrested,” said Mr. Pearson.

“I am glad you agree with me.”

“I don’t. The boy I speak of is not Tom Turner.”

“Who, then?”

“Clarence Kent. His story is very gauzy, and I suspect him of being concerned in the theft.”

Clarence flushed crimson.

“I’ll tell my father, and he’ll have the law of you,” he said passionately.

“He is welcome. I will go further. I suspect, if this boy is searched, the other four ten-dollar bills will be found on him.”

“You are insulting me, Mr. Pearson.”

“I don’t mean to. Are you willing to be searched?”

“No, I am not. Why don’t you search Tom Turner?”

“You are welcome to search me, if you search Clarence also.”

“I decline,” said Clarence hotly.

“It will enable you to prove your innocence.”

“No one has any right to suspect me. I won’t allow it.”

Mr. Pearson looked at the boy fixedly, and noted the agitation which he could not control.

“Mr. Thatcher,” said he, “your only chance of recovering your money is to have your nephew searched.”

CHAPTER XIX.

A TRYING ORDEAL.

EVEN John Thatcher, despite his prejudice against Tom, was struck by his nephew's agitation. Could it be possible that a boy of good parentage, representing the principal family in the place, had been guilty of the vulgar crime of theft? It was not a pleasant thought, but it seemed to present a chance of recovering the other missing money.

"Clarence," he said, "I don't believe you guilty, but you must prove your innocence. You must submit to be searched."

"Why should I be searched and no one else?"

"You may search me," said Tom promptly.

"I will do so," said John Thatcher.

Tom was thoroughly searched. He made no objection, but presented every facility to the merchant. Nothing was found but a little money, for which he could account.

"I don't find anything suspicious," said Mr. Thatcher.

"Of course not. He's got the money at home," sneered Clarence.

"You can search there if you like," retorted Tom.

"Now it is your turn, Clarence."

Clarence turned pale and looked nervous. He gazed about him as if seeking some mode of escape, but it seemed necessary to submit to the ordeal.

"Here," he said, turning the pockets of his pantaloons inside out, "I'll save you the trouble. Here's a few cents, and here is a bunch of keys and jackknife. I hope you are satisfied now."

"Have you no other pockets?" asked Mr. Pearson.

"Yes, there are pockets in my vest. Here is a lead pencil and in the other pocket I keep my watch. You can feel for yourself if you want to."

"The boy doesn't seem to have anything except his own property," said Mr. Thatcher, veering round again to suspicion of Tom. "I suspect it's the other boy after all."

"Will you open your vest?" said Mr. Pearson.

"Why should I open my vest?" faltered Clarence.

"Because there is an inside pocket, I presume."

"I never keep anything in my inside pocket."

"Then you cannot complain of our examining it."

"Yes I do," answered Clarence, vehemently. "I object to being insulted."

"We examined Tom's inside vest pocket."

"You have searched all you are going to," said Clarence. "You seem to forget that I am a gentleman."

"I hope you are, but we must treat you and Tom alike."

Clarence held together the sides of his vest firmly.

"I shall not allow you to look any further," he said.

Clarence's obstinacy aroused his uncle's suspicion.

"Hold him, Mr. Pearson," he said, "and I will examine the inside pocket."

Despite Clarence's struggles this was done. The vest was unbuttoned, and Mr. Thatcher thrust in his hand.

He drew out four ten-dollar bills.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, "what have we here? As I live it is the rest of the missing money."

Clarence stood a picture of confusion. Even Tom pitied him, though Clarence had done so

much to throw the blame of his own guilt upon him.

"Give me the nine dollars you received in change and the sleeve buttons," said Mr. Thatcher sternly.

Clarence handed them over without a word.

"Now you can go!" said the merchant with a contemptuous glare. "You are my nephew, and I shall not have you arrested, though the proofs of your guilt are complete. I should like to know, however, whether you stole the wallet or found it."

"I found it," answered Clarence faintly. "I meant to give back the money after a few days."

"Why were you going to wait a few days?"

"I wanted to see if you would keep your word and pay a reward for the recovery of the wallet."

"I don't believe a word of it. Your buying the sleeve buttons shows that you meant to use the money for your own purposes. You can keep them if you like. I wouldn't want to wear them."

Clarence slunk out of the store and returned home with feelings by no means enviable. There was silence for a moment after his departure.

As Mr. Thatcher turned back to put the money in his cash drawer, Mr. Pearson said in a sig-

nificant tone, "Haven't you forgotten something, Mr. Thatcher?"

"What?" asked the merchant, wheeling round suddenly.

"You have forgotten to ask pardon of Tom Turner for your unjust and unfounded suspicions of him."

"I acknowledge that he isn't guilty," said Thatcher awkwardly.

"That is not enough. You have hounded and persecuted him, and it is your duty to apologize to him."

"I know how to behave without your telling me."

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Pearson, turning to the half dozen men who were gathered in the store, "those of you who think Mr. Thatcher ought to apologize to Tom Turner will please raise your hands."

Every hand was raised.

John Thatcher looked embarrassed and angry, but he was politic enough to see that he had better follow the counsel given him.

"We are all of us liable to mistakes," he muttered, "and it seems I have made a mistake here."

"Well?"

This came from Mr. Pearson.

"I am sorry that I had Tom Turner arrested, though you must all admit that circumstances were very much against him."

"That is only a half way apology," said Mr. Pearson.

"I am satisfied," said Tom quietly, "and I am sorry for Clarence Kent."

"That is generous in you, as he even to the last tried to throw suspicion on you."

"We must forget and forgive," said Tom.

He gave the signal to the rest by walking out of the store, and the others followed.

Mr. Pearson walked along with Tom.

"I congratulate you on coming out of your troubles so honorably," said Pearson. "There's not a shadow of doubt who took the money."

"Clarence must have yielded to sudden temptation."

"There is no excuse for him. He isn't short of money. His father keeps him well stocked with pocket money, and he has no wants that his father is not ready to supply."

"I suppose he has formed extravagant habits," said Tom.

"Which you have not?"

"No; I am satisfied if I can get a decent supply

of clothes. Necessaries are enough for me. I don't trouble myself about luxuries."

"Yet I shouldn't wonder if at thirty-five you were a richer man than Clarence. He has been too much indulged, while you were learning to be self-reliant and economical."

The next day it was rumored that Clarence had left Hillsboro for a boarding school in the next county.

The rumor proved to be correct. The boy could not face his townsmen, for he was well aware that within twenty-four hours every man, woman, and child in the place would be made acquainted with his guilt. Squire Kent was exceedingly mortified and humiliated by the knowledge of his son's disgrace. It happened singularly that the first words of comfort came to him from Tom.

Meeting him the day after his son's departure, the squire halted and said in a somewhat embarrassed tone, "I regret, Thomas, that you should have got into trouble through the fault of one of my family."

"It is all over now, Squire Kent," said Tom. "Has Clarence gone to boarding school?"

"Yes; I trust that he will, under strict discipline, overcome his waywardness and atone for his fault."

"When you write to him, please give him my regards."

The squire eyed Tom in amazement.

"You send him your regards!" he ejaculated.

"Yes, sir; why not?"

"After all his efforts to injure you?"

"I forgive him for all that. He wouldn't have taken the money if he had stopped to think. Don't be too hard upon him!"

"Thomas Turner," said the squire with a little choking in his throat, "you are a noble boy. Will you shake hands with me?"

"With pleasure, sir," and the boy found his hand warmly grasped by his aristocratic townsman.

"When you want a favor come to me."

"Thank you, sir."

"I wish Clarence was like that boy," thought the squire, as he walked slowly homeward. "He has a noble heart."

CHAPTER XX.

HANNIBAL CARTER HAS A NEW IDEA.

IT will be remembered that Hannibal Carter, the richest of old Brinton Pendergast's heirs, bought the miser's homestead, with the expectation that some gold or treasure might be secreted either in the cellar or somewhere in the adjoining lot. He made a thorough investigation, digging under the cellar floor, and turning up the soil outside, but not a solitary gold coin rewarded his efforts. This was particularly unsatisfactory, for he felt that he had paid for the property a hundred dollars more than its intrinsic value. He would have tried to sell it but for the thought that in spite of his unsuccessful search there might after all be some money secreted somewhere in the house or about the grounds. If this should be the case, and the purchaser should find the hoard, he would never be able to forgive himself.

About this time Mr. Carter paid a visit to New York, and dropped into an office on Wall Street with which he sometimes had transactions. For

Hannibal Carter was a thrifty man, and every year set aside some money for the purchase of securities.

“Good morning, Mr. Bradley,” he said. “Being in the city I thought I would drop in upon you.”

“I expected you,” said Nahum Bradley quietly.

“Why? It is not my usual time for coming to New York.”

“I thought you might have some stocks to buy—or sell.”

“But why should you think so?” queried Hannibal, looking puzzled.

“Hasn’t your uncle, Brinton Pendergast, died recently?”

“Yes.”

“I suppose you came in for a good share of the property?”

“A good share of the property?” repeated Hannibal scornfully. “Why, there was next to no property.”

“Next to no property!” repeated the broker, in his turn looking surprised. “What property was there, if you don’t mind telling me?”

“The old man left the house he lived in with a small amount of land adjoining, some worthless mining stock, and a hundred and fifty dollars in money.”

"Well, what else?"

"What else? There was nothing else, except an old trunk of clothing, he bequeathed to Tom Turner and his mother."

"What did you get?"

"The worthless mining stock," answered Hannibal with a harsh laugh.

"And the house?"

"Went to some old maid cousins of mine. Fifty dollars went to Hector Pendergast, and the tin trunk and a hundred dollars to Tom Turner and his mother."

"But what about the stocks and bonds?"

"The stocks and bonds? There were none."

"You are mistaken. I have the best reason for knowing that the old man had nearly ten thousand dollars in that form."

"What!" gasped Hannibal Carter in excitement.

"It is as I say."

"But how do you know?"

"For the simple reason that he bought them through me."

"When?"

"At different times during the last ten years."

"But why did you never tell me this?"

"My dear sir, I don't tell one customer the business of another."

"But I was the old man's nephew."

"True, but that would be no excuse for the violation of confidence. Besides, the old man swore me to secrecy. Now that he is dead, I feel at liberty to mention the matter."

"In what securities did Uncle Brinton invest?" asked Hannibal eagerly.

"There were five Erie bonds of one thousand dollars each, some Government bonds, twenty five shares of New York Central, and small lots of miscellaneous securities, amounting, I should say, to about ten thousand dollars in all."

"You don't tell me so?" ejaculated Hannibal Carter, wiping his forehead, which always became moist under the influence of agitation.

"Certainly I do, for I bought the securities for him."

"You are sure it was he?"

"Of course, no one could mistake old Brinton with his rusty camlet cloak and cowhide shoes. He seemed about as much at home in Wall Street, as a cow in a lady's parlor!"

"But where can he have hidden this property?" queried Hannibal, again using his handkerchief to mop his brow.

“I don’t know, I’m sure. You ought to be better able to answer that question.”

Mr. Carter leaned his head upon his hand in anxious thought.

“I had some suspicion of this,” he said. “I felt sure that Uncle Brinton left more than the property disposed of in his will.”

“He may have secreted them somewhere about the house or grounds.”

“Just what I thought, and with this idea I bought the house and lot from my old maid cousins.”

“Pretty shrewd of you. How much did you pay?”

“Three hundred and seventy-five dollars, at least a hundred dollars more than the property was worth.”

“Well, have you searched it?”

“I should say I had,” answered Hannibal emphatically. “I have dug beneath the cellar floor, and plowed up the lot outside.”

“And have found nothing?”

“Not a solitary gold piece.”

“That is strange.”

“Do you think Uncle Brinton left his bonds in any safe deposit vaults?”

“No, he was not the sort of man, in my judg-

ment, to trust them out of his sight. They may yet be secreted about the house or grounds."

"I will search again."

"You will be wise to do so."

"I can't think of any other place where he would be likely to hide them."

"Didn't you make mention of an old trunk?"

"Yes, there was an old trunk of clothing which was left to Tom Turner."

"And who is Tom Turner?"

"Grand nephew of the deceased."

"It is not impossible that the bonds are hidden in that trunk."

"Good heavens ! if it were so Tom would come in for a fortune."

"How long since your uncle died?"

"Two months."

"And how long has this Tom Turner been in possession of the trunk?"

"About that length of time."

"Evidently he hasn't found anything yet, or you would have heard of it."

"I don't know. I have had no communication with the boy since the day of the funeral."

"You don't know whether he and his mother have appeared to become suddenly prosperous?"

"No."

“The boy may be sly, and in the event of making any discovery have kept it to himself.”

“True, true!” said Hannibal uneasily.

“Was there any significant remark accompanying the bequest of the trunk?”

“Yes : Tom was cautioned never to part with it.”

“That means something, probably. It is unfortunate.”

“Why so?”

“Because otherwise I would have recommended you to buy the trunk from this boy at any reasonable price.”

“I’ll do it!” ejaculated Hannibal. “To think that I should have paid a fancy price for that old shanty, when very likely I could have bought the trunk for five dollars.”

“But the boy was especially cautioned not to part with it.”

“Oh, that’s all nonsense. The trunk itself isn’t worth over a dollar, and the boy and his mother are hard up. You wouldn’t catch them refusing ten dollars.”

“I don’t believe ten dollars would buy it. You would be justified in offering twenty-five.”

“But suppose I get hold of it, and find there is nothing in it?” said Hannibal irresolutely.

“Oh, well you know the old saying, nothing venture, nothing have!” Think of the great stake you are playing for—ten thousand dollars at least.”

“You believe there is really as much as that?” queried Carter, dazzled.

“Yes, and more. I have reason to think that your uncle never collected the interest on the bonds, and some of these he must have had at least ten years.”

“Why, the interest would nearly equal the principal!”

“Precisely! And yet you are afraid to risk twenty-five dollars for the purchase of the trunk!”

“Say no more! I’ll go to Hillsboro to-morrow and see what I can do with Tom Turner and his mother.”

Hannibal Carter rose, and left the broker’s office with a new light of hope in his eyes.

“I’ll have that trunk if it costs me a hundred dollars!” he muttered.

CHAPTER XXI.

TOM RECEIVES AN UNEXPECTED CALL.

It was Saturday and Tom was at home, for there was no school. In fact, Tom began to think that he must give up school and get some regular employment, for their funds were getting low. The money which came from Judge Scott was now nearly expended, and as yet no part of their uncle's legacy had been received by his mother.

"I wish I knew of some one who would pay me four dollars a week, mother," Tom said thoughtfully.

"I heard that John Dunn was to leave Mr. Thatcher soon, for a better place in Scranton."

"Mr. Thatcher would never take me after what has happened."

"But it was proved that some one else took the money."

"Yes, but he dislikes and distrusts me for all that."

"I suppose he is ashamed to admit that he has done you so much injustice."

"At any rate, I shouldn't find it agreeable to

work for such a man. John tells me that he is always finding fault."

"I should be sorry to have you leave school, Tom."

"I have a pretty good education now, mother. Besides, I could keep up my studies in the evening."

The conversation had reached this point, when Tom, looking out of the window, saw a top buggy come to a stop before the gate.

"A visitor, mother!" he cried. "Who can it be?"

The driver had by this time got out of the buggy, and Tom, with considerable surprise, recognized Hannibal Carter.

He went out and helped Mr. Carter secure his horse.

"Good morning, Thomas," said the merchant urbanely, "is your mother at home?"

"Yes, sir."

"I happened to be passing through Hillsboro, and thought I would give you a call."

"We are glad to see you," said Tom, though in truth he felt a good deal surprised at this mark of attention from their rich kinsman. "Won't you come into the house?" he added politely.

"With pleasure, though I can't stay very long."

Mrs. Turner greeted the visitor politely, though not as cordially as if the old friendship had been kept up. Once, when Hannibal was as poor as herself, they had been on intimate terms, but as he rose in the social scale, and she remained stationary, their relations had become more formal.

"It is several years since we met, Cousin Hannibal," she said.

"Yes, it is. I have been a busy man, so busy that I could not keep up my old friendships."

"I hear that you have prospered."

"Well, so so," he replied in a guarded tone, for he remembered that Mrs. Turner and Tom were poor relations. "I have had to work hard, and I have succeeded—measurably. You look very snug—and comfortable here."

"We are poor," answered Mrs. Turner. "My husband was not a money maker, and besides he was still a young man when he died."

"True, but you have a stout, strong son, who will soon be able to help you."

"He helps me now. I don't know how I should be able to get along without Tom."

"I haven't been able to do much for mother yet," said Tom, "but I am getting older every year, and hope I can do more."

"Just so, just so!" responded Hannibal, who

felt no interest in Tom's hopes and aspirations, and was anxious to come to the business which brought him over. "I hoped that Uncle Brinton would have done better by all of us than he did."

"I am grateful for the little he did leave us. I have not received the money yet, but when it does come it will be welcome."

"It was a hundred dollars, was it not?"

"Yes."

"I hoped it would be a thousand. We were all deceived in Uncle Brinton's circumstances. I fancied him a rich man."

"So did I. Do you think he left more than appears?"

"I did think so for a time," said Hannibal cautiously, "but I am disposed to believe he lost his money in stocks, or some other way. A stock broker in New York told me he used to deal with him sometimes. Dangerous business, this stock dealing!"

"So I have always heard, but I know next to nothing about it."

"I don't know much myself. I just attend to my legitimate business, and don't bother my head about Wall Street. By the way, Tom had a separate legacy, didn't he?"

"Yes, Uncle Brinton's old trunk."

“ Was there anything in it ? ” asked Hannibal carelessly.

“ Some old clothes belonging to Uncle Brinton. They are of no use to us, being old fashioned and worn. We gave some to a tramp who applied to us for clothing.”

“ I hope you searched the pockets first. There might have been something of value in them.”

“ We searched, but found nothing.”

“ Ahem ! So Tom's legacy is not particularly valuable ? ”

“ No.”

“ The trunk itself is worth very little, I suppose.”

“ I don't think it would fetch fifty cents,” said Tom.

“ Uncle Brinton can't be accused of extravagance,” said Hannibal laughing smoothly. “ I suppose he must have had the trunk for forty years.”

“ So I told Tom,” rejoined Mrs. Turner.

“ So of course it has a certain value on account of old association. I shouldn't mind having it myself, just to remember the old man by. In fact—the idea has just come into my head—I don't mind buying it of you. If you will let me have it for—say, three dollars—I'll take it right along with me to-day.”

“ I don’t care to let it go,” said Tom. “ You remember uncle requested in his will that I would never part with it, but keep it always.”

“ I believe I remember something of the kind, but I should attach no importance to such a request.”

“ I do! ” said Tom emphatically.

“ The old trunk, as you admit, is not worth over fifty cents.”

“ I think it hardly worth that.”

“ Just so ! Now I am willing to give—what did I say ? three dollars ? Well, I’ll do better and pay five dollars for it.”

“ But why should you be willing to pay ten times the value of it,” asked Tom shrewdly.

“ Call it a folly of mine, if you please. It will remind me of old Uncle Brinton.”

“ It reminds me of him also.”

“ True, but I can afford to keep such a souvenir ; you can’t. I don’t call myself a rich man, but five dollars to me is a trifle. To you, I take it, it would be of more importance”

“ You are right there. Five dollars to us is no trifle.”

“ Well, I offer you five dollars for the trunk. That would make the legacy of some substantial value to you. You would be able to spend it for

yourself, or give it to your mother, just as you liked."

"I should be glad to give mother five dollars," said Tom.

"Of course you would," said Hannibal briskly, feeling that he had won. "Well, here is the money!" and he drew a five-dollar note from his wallet, and laid it temptingly on the table at his side. "You have done well in accepting my offer."

"But I have *not* accepted your offer, Cousin Hannibal," said Tom, firmly. "After what uncle said in the will, I don't think I have any right to do so."

"That's all very foolish, Thomas," said Mr. Carter impatiently. "I am sure your mother will agree with me."

"No, Cousin Hannibal, I side with Tom. Of course the money would be serviceable to us, I admit that."

"The fact is," said Carter, forcing himself to be suave, "I am influenced partially by my desire to be of service to you—and Thomas. Naturally the trunk would be of little or no value to me. To prove what I say, I am going to offer your son ten dollars for the trunk."

Tom was beginning to be astonished. He knew



"Then don't blame me if you fetch up in the poor house!" exclaimed Mr. Carter as he flung himself out of the room.—Page 167.

Tom Turner's Legacy.

enough of Hannibal Carter to feel sure that he was not a man likely to be influenced by motives of benevolence. What, then, was his object?

"You have made me a very liberal offer," he said, "and if it were not for the clause in the will, I would accept. As it is, I must decline."

"Come now, Thomas. I really want to help you and your mother. I'll give you fifteen dollars for the trunk."

"I wouldn't sell it for a hundred—*now*," said Tom.

"Then don't blame me if you fetch up in the poorhouse!" exclaimed Hannibal angrily. "Such utter folly is hard to credit. Good day!" and he flung himself out of the room in a passion.

Tom and his mother looked at each other after the abrupt departure of their guest.

"What does it all mean, Tom?" asked Mrs. Turner in bewilderment.

"I don't know, mother, but I shall try to find out."

CHAPTER XXII.

A DISCOVERY.

THE more Tom thought of Hannibal Carter's eagerness to secure the trunk, the more he was puzzled. Mr. Carter was a hard-headed man of business, and would not allow sentimental considerations to influence him. He needed no souvenir of Uncle Brinton, being the possessor of the house and the scanty furniture contained in it.

What, then, could be his motive ?

"Mother," said Tom, after a pause, "you remember Cousin Hannibal asked us if we had searched the pockets of the articles of clothing we gave away."

"Yes."

"I am going to examine those that remain. Evidently he thought there might be something of value hidden in the trunk."

"It may be as well to look, but I have little faith in your making any important discoveries."

"At any rate it won't take long to look."

So Tom turned out the musty clothing once

more, and piled it up on the floor. One by one he examined the pockets, but found nothing. So he came to the last coat. As he was folding it up, his hand came in contact with something—it felt like a paper—evidently sewed within the lining.

“Mother,” said Tom in some excitement, “lend me your scissors.”

Mrs. Turner complied with his request.

“What is it?” she inquired.

“There is a paper inside. It may be of importance.”

He ripped the lining hastily, and, thrusting in his hand, drew out a sheet of paper folded up in the shape of a letter, but without an envelope.

Examining it, he found it addressed to himself. Opening it quickly, he read these words, written in a cramped hand, for his uncle used a pen but seldom in his later years.

“NEPHEW THOMAS :

“I have decided to leave you this trunk in my will. I enjoin upon you a year after my death to call upon James Scott, a lawyer in the town of Scranton, and present this letter to him. There is a certain matter about which I have instructed him, and he will, as an honest man, perhaps

the only one in whom I have confidence, carry out my wishes. BRINTON PENDERGAST."

Tom read this letter in amazement.

"What do you make of it, mother?" he asked.

"It seems very mysterious," answered Mrs. Turner.

"It seems very strange that he should have placed it within the lining of a coat. Suppose I had given this coat away?"

"Probably, as he was not in the habit of giving away clothing, this never occurred to him."

"He might have laid it at the bottom of the trunk."

"Your Uncle Brinton was an unusually cautious person. He had a mania for secreting things, and this is an illustration of it. At any rate the letter has come into your hands, and so things have turned out as he desired."

"Will you take care of it, mother, till the time comes for presenting it? I don't want to run the risk of carrying it about with me."

"Yes; I will hide it in one of my bureau drawers."

"I wish I knew what it refers to."

"We shall have to wait patiently."

"Perhaps Judge Scott would tell me."

"He is evidently under instructions from Uncle

Brinton not to do so, or he would have told us before."

Tom put away the clothes and locked the trunk, though he did not feel anxious about its contents being stolen. The letter was of more value probably than the clothing.

He had scarcely locked the trunk when Bob Ainsworth knocked at the door.

"How are you, Bob?" said Tom. "If you want any second-hand clothing, I've got a supply in that trunk. You can pick and choose—cheap for cash."

"Some of your own?"

"They were left me by my great uncle, Brinton Pendergast, of Scranton."

"Thank you; I don't want to make a guy of myself. But I've come here on business. Don't you want a place?"

"Yes, I want one very much."

"I hear that Mr. Norcross wants a young clerk."

"The shoe dealer?"

"Yes."

"I wouldn't mind working in a shoe store, but I am afraid he and I wouldn't agree about wages."

"You can call and investigate."

"I will. Thank you for putting me on the track."

"I'll go along with you."

Jacob Norcross was very little known in the village, as he had recently bought out the stock of Mr. Bensel, an old time, favorite tradesman, who had made up his mind to go out West with his family. Mr. Norcross, who came from a town in the interior of the State, had only just taken possession of the business. Mr. Bensel was still in the village, not yet having completed his preparations to remove to Iowa. Not far from the store the boys fell in with Percy Bensel, the only son of the former dealer, a bright and vivacious boy of twelve.

"Hallo, Percy," said Tom ; "is it true that Mr. Norcross wants a boy to work in the store?"

"Yes, Tom ; I heard him tell father so."

"He hasn't engaged any one?"

"No."

"I think of applying."

"All right, Tom. I hope you'll get it if you want it, but I'll tell you one thing."

"What is that?"

"Mr. Norcross is awful mean. He won't pay decent wages."

"What makes you think so?"

"Yesterday afternoon he asked me to go into the store and tend for him for an hour. You know I used to tend for father quite often, and knew all about the stock. He wanted to go somewhere. Well, he stayed away an hour and a half, and while he was gone I took in ten dollars and a quarter. How much do you think he paid me?"

"A quarter," suggested Bob.

"A quarter!" repeated Percy. "Do you think the man is a millionaire?"

"Why, a quarter wouldn't be too much for an hour and a half, especially considering how much you sold."

"I agree with you, Bob, but you don't know Jacob Norcross. When he got back, he asked me first how much I had sold, and looked carefully over the money drawer to see if I had put in all the money, and then said: 'Well, bub, you've done pretty well for a small boy. If you were going to stay in Hillsboro I would hire you regularly.'"

"Thank you," I said, "'but father wouldn't let me work at any regular business till I have got through going to school.'"

"I suppose you expect to be paid for your services, eh?" he went on.

“ ‘Yes, sir, if you please,’ ” I answered.

“ He felt in his pocket and drew out—*two cents*—and handed them to me.

“ ‘Take them, bub,’ ” he said, “ ‘and mind you don’t spend them for cigarettes.’ ”

“ Two cents ! ” ejaculated Tom and Bob in concert. “ Well, that beats all I ever heard of. Did he really mean it, or was he in joke ? ”

“ Mean it ? Of course he did.”

“ Did you take the money ? ”

“ Not much ! ” answered Percy indignantly. “ I told him I was afraid he couldn’t afford to pay so much—I would rather work for nothing.”

“ What did he say ? ”

“ He muttered that boys had pretty high ideas about pay, and put the two cents back in his pocket.”

“ After that, Tom, you may not care to apply,” said Bob.

“ I’ll do so out of curiosity.”

Mr. Norcross was in the store, a small man with wizened features and blinking eyes.

“ Well, boys,” he said, “ do you want to buy some shoes ? ”

“ No, sir,” answered Tom “ I heard you wanted to hire a boy.”

“Ahem, yes ! Do you know anything about the business ? ”

“No sir ; but I could soon learn.”

“Of course as a green hand you couldn’t expect very high wages.”

“I don’t expect *high* wages, sir.”

“I’ll inquire about you, and if you are favorably spoken of, I’ll give you—a dollar and a quarter a week.”

Tom opened his eyes in amazement.

“A dollar and a quarter !” he ejaculated.

“Yes ; you won’t be hardly worth that at first, but you look as if you’d soon learn.”

“What are the hours, sir ? ”

“From seven in the morning till nine o’clock in the evening.”

“Thank you, sir, but I should want as much as four dollars a week.”

“Four dollars !” gasped Norcross, raising both hands in dismay. “You must think I am made of money.”

The boys left the store, strongly tempted to laugh, though Tom owned to a feeling of disappointment.

“There doesn’t seem to be much money in selling shoes,” he said. “I shall have to try some other business.”

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE DECOY LETTER.

HILLSBORO was a town of six thousand inhabitants and contained a number of stores. Tom had now made up his mind to secure a position if he could, and went the rounds, but no one needed a boy. Two took down his name and told him they might send for him, but Tom did not think he could afford to wait indefinitely. Besides the offer to work for Mr. Norcross, at a dollar and a quarter a week, Mr. Forge, the blacksmith, offered to take him as an apprentice. But Tom did not fancy being a blacksmith, and declined the proposition with thanks, for Mr. Forge, though a blunt, was a kindly man, and would not have made the offer to every boy.

“You’re a good, strong boy,” he said, “and you would make a good blacksmith, and by and by have a shop of your own. I’ll board you and give you a dollar a week the first year. Come, what do you say?”

"I am much obliged to you, Mr. Forge, but while I stay in Hillsboro I wish to live at home. Besides, I don't think I should like to be a blacksmith."

"What finer business could you have? I'm rising forty years old, and have a good house and shop and a thousand dollars in the bank. It isn't every one that can say that."

"That's true, Mr. Forge, but I think I should like some other trade better, even if I didn't make so much money."

"I suppose you don't like the work because it is dirty."

"I didn't think of that. Perhaps if I were sure of making as good a blacksmith as you I would decide to work at the business."

Mr. Forge was pleased with this compliment, and it removed the little annoyance he felt at Tom's disinclination to enter his service.

"Well, suit yourself, Tom," he said good naturedly. "Perhaps you're better adapted for some other business. We can't all be blacksmiths."

"If we were I am afraid there would be too much competition."

"That's so."

On the whole Tom began to get discouraged.

He realized that he ought to be at work. He was ready and willing, but the work was not to be had. The school term had closed, and he decided not to go back. His education was not complete, but he could not afford to study any longer.

The evening mail at Hillsboro came in at five o'clock. Tom seldom inquired for letters for neither he nor his mother had many correspondents. But about supper time Dan Otis, in passing the house, called out, "There's a letter for you at the post-office."

"A letter—for me?"

"Well, it's either for you or your mother. I don't know which. I hope it contains good news."

"I hope so too. I'll go right over."

The post-office was in one corner of the drug store, and the druggist was postmaster. Tom entered, and stepped up to the corner used for letter boxes.

"Is there a letter for me?" he asked.

"Yes, Tom," answered the druggist. "Did Dan Otis tell you?"

"Yes, sir."

"I asked him to do so, as I thought the letter might be important. It is postmarked at New York."

Tom was puzzled. He didn't call to mind any one in New York with whom he or his mother was personally acquainted. However, he would soon learn.

The letter was directed to

MR. THOMAS TURNER.

HILLSBORO,

NEW YORK,

It was the first time Tom had been addressed as "Mr." and it gave him an odd sensation. He cut open the envelope at one end with his pen-knife, and read the letter with curiosity. It was brief and ran as follows :

"THOMAS TURNER : If you and your mother will come to my office at once you will hear something to your advantage. It is important that you should come to-morrow. Call before twelve if possible.

JAMES ELMORE.

"ROOM 15, BERKELEY BUILDING, BROADWAY."

There is no Berkeley building on Broadway, but I have suppressed the real name for sufficient reasons.

"Something to our advantage !" repeated Tom. "Well, that sounds well. I wonder if any one has left mother or myself a fortune. I hope so. Even a small one will be acceptable."

He lost no time in going home and showing the letter to his mother.

"Mother," he said, "here is a letter from New York, and I don't understand it. Do you know any James Elmore?"

"No, Tom, I don't recall any such name."

"That name is signed to the letter. Here it is."

Mrs. Turner read it through twice with mingled interest and curiosity.

"It may have been some friend or acquaintance of your father's," she said at length. "If so, I don't think he mentioned the name to me."

"I think we had better go to New York by the morning train, mother."

"Perhaps it would do if you went alone."

"No, the letter expressly says we are both to come."

"I was thinking of the expense, Tom. The fare is a dollar each way, and that for both of us makes four dollars."

"Fortunately we have got enough to go."

"It won't leave us much."

"True, but I think we can get a little money in advance on Uncle Brinton's legacy to you. As there is 'something of advantage,' we may receive some money in New York too."

“Very well, Tom, if you think best we will go. At what time does the train leave?”

“At 9:30 ; that is, the one we shall want to take. There is an earlier one, but it would get us to New York too soon.”

CHAPTER XXIV.

MR. CARTER COMMITS BURGLARY.

“THIS going to the city will be a rare experience for me, Tom,” said Mrs. Turner. “I have not visited New York for three years.”

“And yet we are only thirty miles distant.”

“If it were only the distance, but the fare is a dollar, and dollars have not been plenty with me since your poor father died.”

A visit to New York would be quite as rare an experience for Tom. He and his mother both looked forward to it with interest. To all who live in the country the great city is invested with a peculiar charm, and especially to the young. It had been the dream of Tom's life some day to live and work in New York. He knew a young man, employed as a salesman in Simpson, Crawford & Simpson's on Sixth Avenue, who generally spent a week of his vacation in Hillsboro, with an aunt. This young man, Thomas Jefferson Vail, or T. Jefferson Vail, as he generally wrote his name, seemed to Tom quite a great man, and

he always looked up to him with extreme deference. Jefferson Vail put on many airs, and had many stories to tell of the city. Judging from his own statements he was intimately acquainted with the leading men in New York—Astor and Vanderbilt, Jay Gould and Chauncey Depew. It was not strange that Tom should regard the young man from New York as a person of importance.

“I wonder,” he said to himself more than once, “whether I shall ever be working in New York, and get acquainted with any of these famous men. I hope so. It must be fine to have such friends.”

Of New York Tom knew very little. He had been there once, about five years before, but his recollections of the visit were vague and indefinite. He felt that it was quite time for him to go again and renew his impressions of the great metropolis.

“Mother,” he said, “let us carry some lunch with us and stay all day.”

“But what shall we find to occupy us so long, Tom?”

“We shall find plenty to do in New York. You know I have never been there but once before. It won’t cost us any more to stay all day. We can go round and see the streets and

stores, and the Elevated road. Oh, I hope it will be pleasant, so that we can enjoy ourselves."

"Very well, Tom, we will stay then. Do you know about the trains?"

"Yes; the last train leaves New York at eight o'clock, but there is an earlier one at five."

"We will take that. We shall not want to stay so late."

Tom and his mother were at the station at least fifteen minutes before the departure of the train. Tom hurried his mother off, being nervously apprehensive of being late.

About ten o'clock a horse and buggy appeared in the main street of Hillsboro, driven by Hannibal Carter. He left the buggy at a stable and walked towards the Turner cottage. When he reached it he saw that the curtains were down.

"They have gone to the city," he said to himself in a tone of satisfaction, "and the coast is clear. It was a bright idea of mine writing that letter."

The Turners' house stood at some distance from its neighbors. This was favorable to Mr. Carter, who wished to enter and explore the old trunk which he believed to contain the valuable bonds belonging to Mr. Pendergast's estate.

The doors were undoubtedly locked both in

front and in the rear. He tried them both and found it to be as he anticipated.

"Probably I may get in at some window," he reflected.

He went round to the back of the house, and tried one of the kitchen windows. He smiled with satisfaction as it rose easily. The problem was solved. He climbed in, not without a little difficulty, for he was no longer as active as he had been when a young man.

He walked through the empty rooms, and then went up the back staircase to a small apartment occupied by Tom. There, just opposite the bed, stood the old trunk.

"Aha, here it is!" said Hannibal complacently. "I will soon solve the problem of the lost bonds."

He got down on his knees, and drew from his pocket a large bunch of keys with which he had provided himself. There were a dozen in the bunch. He tried one after another till there were but two left. He was growing nervous. But the eleventh fitted the lock, and the lid lifted.

Just then a slight noise behind him startled him.

He turned round in nervous trepidation and saw a large Maltese cat eying his proceedings with evident curiosity.

“Pshaw ! I thought it was a human being !” he muttered with a feeling of relief. “Scat, you beast !” and he proceeded to put the cat to flight, for he did not like to have even a cat watching him.

Well, the trunk was open. He took out one garment after the other, and searched the pockets. But this had been done thoroughly by Tom Turner already, and Mr. Carter made no discoveries.

“There must be a false bottom somewhere,” murmured Hannibal. He felt round carefully with his fingers, in the hope of touching some hidden spring, but his efforts were not crowned with success.

Hannibal began to feel troubled and disappointed. After all the trouble he had taken was he not to be rewarded ? If the mining securities were not here, where were they ? Was it possible that Tom had found them and put them away in a place of safety ? The very thought brought the perspiration to Hannibal’s forehead. Still he continued his investigation. But in the end he had to give it up. He raised the trunk on end and tapped the under part, but he could discover no signs of a false bottom.

Would Tom put the papers in his bureau ? He

opened the drawers, but could discover nothing except a limited supply of underwear, cheap and well worn, which he turned over contemptuously. He closed the last drawer, and was about to put back the clothing in the trunk, when his heart stood still. He heard a cough in the lower part of the house. Some one must be below ! He went down-stairs in a state of nervous excitement, feeling that he must devise some plausible excuse for his having entered the place as he did. He was indeed in an awkward predicament.

CHAPTER XXV.

TWO OF A KIND.

MR. CARTER opened the door at the foot of the stairs, and saw an ill-looking man dressed like a tramp, who evidently had as little business in the house as himself.

“Who are you?” he demanded sternly.

“Who am I? I’m a gentleman.”

“You don’t look it. What is your business here?”

“Is this your house?”

“No.”

“Then what is *your* business here, master? Are you a burglar?”

“A burglar!” gasped Hannibal. “How dare you insult me by such a question?”

“No offence, mister. I guess there ain’t so much difference between us. *I* am a burglar, I own up to it.”

“I’ve a great mind to have you arrested on your own confession.”

“Ho, ho ! That is rich.”

“How did you get into the house?”

“Same way as you did !”

“What !” gasped Hannibal, flushing.

“Jest as I said. I seed you when you got into the kitchen winder, and says I to myself, ‘He’s one of the purfesh.’ I say, have you found anything vallyble up-stairs?”

The tramp grinned as he put the question, and leered at Hannibal in a way that made the worthy gentleman wince.

“My friend,” he said, “you labor under a strange hallucination.”

“Do I? That sounds bad. I hope it isn’t dangerous.”

“I mean that you are quite mistaken as to my character.”

“Am I? What are you, then, if I may make so bold as to inquire?”

“I am a relative and friend of the people who live in this house.”

“And you generally visit ’em when they ain’t at home, ho, ho !” and the tramp laughed significantly.

“I was here last week, and left something behind me,” explained Hannibal. “It was a—an heirloom, valuable for its associations, and so I

came after it to-day, but to my regret I find my cousin absent."

"So you got in at the kitchen winder?"

"Yes, the doors were locked, and I could not conveniently call again," said Hannibal in a mild voice.

He was actually apologizing to a self-confessed burglar for his presence in the house.

"Jest the way with me," said the other with a fresh grin.

"But *you* are no relative!" said Hannibal, with an assumption of sternness. "It was right enough in me, but you have no business here."

"I'm a distant relative of the people in the house," said the other.

"That is untrue!"

"I'm sorry not to find 'em at home, and so I thought I would drop in and leave my card."

"I think it is my duty to have you arrested."

"All right! Go ahead and do it. I'll tell about your gettin' in at the winder."

"On second thoughts, I will have compassion on you. You may have done wrong through poverty. You may be naturally honest, though your actions are suspicious."

"I am, boss, I am!" said the tramp with a cunning leer.

"Under those circumstances, I don't want to be too hard on you. You can leave the house as you came in. I will not molest you."

"I wouldn't advise you to. You see your fight-in' weight isn't as great as mine. Lor, I could double you up inside of a minute," and the tramp stretched out a muscular arm that would have compared favorably with a blacksmith's.

"I mean you no harm," said Hannibal uneasily. "And now, my good man you had better go."

"Are you goin', too?"

"I shall go very soon."

"Then I'll wait till you go. I want a fair division, pard."

"What do you mean by addressing me in that disgusting way?" demanded Hannibal, half alarmed.

"Oh, we're on the same lay only you're more respectable than I. Come, what did you find upstairs?"

"What do you mean? How dare you speak to me that way?"

"I'm goin' up to see;" and before Hannibal could stop him the tramp had run up the narrow stairs which Mr. Carter had just descended.

Hannibal followed him in dismay.

At the top of the stairs there was a good view

of Tom's room. There was the trunk, with the lid raised, and a pile of clothing on the floor.

"Oh, I see! exclaimed the tramp. "You are one of us, after all. That's what you were about, eh? I disturbed you at your work, ho, ho! I say, this is rich."

Hannibal Carter felt like sinking through the floor. Appearances were certainly against him. It did look suspicious—the open trunk, the pile of clothing on the floor.

"Oh, you are a sly one!" said the tramp, pointing his finger at the discomfited merchant facetiously. "I say, you're a credit to the purfesh. Suppose we go into partnership."

"Wait a minute!" and Hannibal replaced the clothes and shut the trunk, but did not venture to take out his bunch of keys and lock it.

"That trunk belonged to my uncle," he continued. "It was left to my young cousin. He offered me any of the clothes, and I was examining them. But I don't want them. They are too old fashioned."

"A good story, that! You're foxy, old man. I say, lend me ten dollars."

"What!" ejaculated Hannibal, drawing back.

"I want ten dollars. You can lend it or give it. It's all the same."

"You will have to excuse me!"

"No, I won't. Give me ten dollars, or I'll come round to-night and tell what I've seen. Is it yes or no?"

"Come down-stairs, and we'll talk things over."

"All right! I'm agreeable, but the money I must have."

When they had reached the kitchen, Mr. Carter felt a little bolder.

"If you are really in want," he said, "I don't mind giving you a dollar."

"It won't do," said the tramp, shaking his head.

"A dollar won't do me. Give me a tenner."

"I don't think I have as much."

"Yes, you have, I know from your appearance. You ain't a broken down tramp like me. You're solid."

Hannibal felt that he was in a tight place. He was fond of money, and to give away ten dollars was like drawing a tooth. But he did not dare to refuse.

"Here is the money!" he said. "Turn over a new leaf, my friend, and reform. You may yet become a respectable member of society."

"Like you, eh?" said the other, with a mock-

ing laugh. "By, by, old gentleman ! Shall I get out of the winder ?"

"No, no ; I will draw the bolt. You can go out at the door. "

After his unpleasant companion had left, Mr. Carter felt that he, too, had remained too long. He locked the door again, made his exit through the window, which he lowered again, and hastened to the stable, where he had left his horse and buggy. His visit had been a failure, as he sorrowfully acknowledged to himself.

Meantime, how fared it with Tom and his mother, lured away to the city by a cruel deception ?

CHAPTER XXVI.

TOM IN THE CITY.

TOM was full of pleasurable excitement during the journey to the city. The towns and cities through which the train passed were invested for him with an interest quite beyond their real attractions. To Mrs. Turner also the journey was a novelty, but she had passed the age of enthusiasm, and her thoughts were taken up with wondering what Mr. Elmore would have to say to them.

They reached the Grand Central Station at Forty Second Street, and descended from the car with a crowd of other passengers.

"Have you any idea where the Berkeley Building is, mother?" asked Tom.

"No, Tom; I know very little about New York."

"Do you think it is near here—near enough for us to walk?"

"No, I don't think so. Most of the business buildings are in the lower part of Broadway, two or three miles from here."

"Shine your shoes?" asked an enterprising young arab in front of the depot.

Tom looked at his shoes. They had a soiled appearance, and did need polishing, but it seemed to him extravagant to pay for a service which he generally performed for himself. He was about to decline, when a gentleman who was having his shoes polished by another boy just alongside, said :

"Go ahead, Johnny ; I'll pay for the boy's shine."

Instantly the bootblack plumped down on his knees before Tom.

"Thank you, sir," said Tom, "but I don't like to keep my mother standing here while I have it done."

"She will find a seat in the waiting-room just inside ;" and the gentleman pointed to a door on the Forty-Second Street front of the depot.

"I will go in, Tom," said Mrs. Turner. "You may come for me when you are ready."

So Tom not unwillingly yielded his shoes to the skill of the young bootblack, and was quite surprised by the bright polish which seemed to turn his country made shoes into a pair of patent leathers.

"I am sociable," said the gentleman. "I never like to be alone in anything."

"I am very much obliged to you, sir."

"Oh, you're welcome. It's only a trifle. You are a stranger in New York, I take it?"

"Yes, sir. I have come into the city with my mother on a little business. Can you tell me where I will find the Berkeley Building on Broadway?"

"Yes; it is below the Astor House. Have you an errand there?"

"Yes, sir. At the office of Mr. Elmore, Room 15."

"I know Mr. Elmore. I have an office in the same building."

"Indeed, sir," said Tom, in a tone of relief; "Then you can show me where it is."

"Yes; I shall get on board a Fourth Avenue horse car, and you can go along with me."

Tom called his mother, and they adopted the stranger's suggestion.

"My name is Shapleigh," he said, touching his hat politely to Mrs. Turner. "I am glad to be of any service to you."

"Thank you, sir. Tom and I are quite unused to the city. We should not be here to-day but for a letter received from Mr. Elmore."

Mr. Shapleigh seemed so friendly that the letter was shown to him.

“I really hope you will be well paid for coming to the city,” he said. “Mr. Elmore is an honorable man, and he always means what he says. Have you any acquaintance with him?”

“I never heard of him, sir. He may be an acquaintance of my late husband, though I never remember to have heard his name mentioned.”

They reached the end of the car route near the Astor House, and got out. The three walked down Broadway together till they reached a tall, handsome building, which seemed to Tom immensely high, and entered. There was an elevator, but No. 15 was only one flight up, and they walked up the stairs.

“There is Mr. Elmore’s office,” said Mr. Shapleigh, pointing out the door. “I am No. 22. I shall be glad if you will drop in on me after you are through with your business. I am interested in you, and hope to hear that it was really for your advantage to call.”

“Thank you,” said Mrs. Turner gratefully.

Tom knocked at the door of No. 15.

“Come in !” was heard from inside.

He opened the door, and at a desk saw a man of middle age engaged in writing. The office was a handsome one, covered with a neat carpet, and well lighted.

"Is this Mr. Elmore?" asked Tom's mother.

"Yes madam. What can I do for you?" was the courteous response.

"I am Mrs. Turner."

Mr. Elmore listened with a little air of puzzled surprise.

"Pardon me, madam," he said, "but I am not familiar with your name."

"I come from Hillsboro," continued Mrs. Turner. "I received your letter."

"You received my letter? I don't quite understand. I don't remember having written you a letter."

Tom and Mrs. Turner looked at each other in dismay. What could it mean?

"Have you the letter with you?"

Mrs. Turner took it from her pocket and handed it to Mr. Elmore.

He read it, at first with surprise, then with indignation.

"Madam," he said, "some one has played a cruel trick upon you. I never wrote this letter."

"Then who could have written it?" gasped Mrs. Turner.

"I can't conjecture. Let me see, was it post-marked in this city? Yes, here is the postmark 'New York.'"

“What shall I do?” said Tom’s mother pathetically. “I thought to be sure the letter was genuine, or I would not have come. I can ill afford the expense of the journey.”

“It is too bad!” said Mr. Elmore, in a tone of sympathy. “I wish I had the person here who has played this cruel trick on you. I would give him a lesson.”

Tom’s face flushed, and his fist involuntarily clinched. He evidently sympathized with Mr. Elmore in his last remark.

“Well, mother,” he said, “we may as well go. We don’t want to take up any more of Mr. Elmore’s time.”

“Yes, we may as well go, Tom.”

“Good morning!” said the lawyer, for such he was. “I can’t tell you how sorry I am that this should have happened.”

Mrs. Turner responded mechanically, and they went out into the hall.

“I suppose we had better go home, Tom,” said his mother sadly.

“We promised to call upon Mr. Shapleigh, mother. There is his office, No. 22.”

Tom knocked at the door, and on being bidden to do so, entered.

“Ah, here you are!” said his late traveling

companion cheerfully. "So you got through with your business promptly."

"Yes, sir. There was no business to get through."

"What's that?" asked Mr. Shapleigh quickly.

"The letter was a hoax—Mr. Elmore didn't write it."

"Sit down. Tell me all about it," said Mr. Shapleigh. "We must get to the bottom of this. Show me the letter."

Tom put it into his hands.

"Have you any enemy?" he asked, after examining the letter.

"No, sir, not that I know of."

"There seems to be a mystery about it. Some one must have been interested in getting you to the city."

"I can think of no one."

"Did you lock up the house when you went away?"

"Yes."

"Did you leave anything of value in it?"

"No, sir. We have little of value to leave."

"Well, I confess I'm stumped!" said Shapleigh, with a puzzled expression. "Let me think!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

GOOD OUT OF EVIL.

"It was a cruel trick," said Mrs. Turner, the tears coming into her eyes. "We could ill spare the money which the journey cost."

"How much was it?" asked Mr. Shapleigh.

"Four dollars."

"At least I can save you anxiety on that score," said Shapleigh kindly, and he took a five-dollar note from his pocket.

"But, sir," protested the widow, overcome by surprise, "we are strangers to you."

"You don't seem so," said Mr. Shapleigh smiling. "In fact I feel as if you and Tom were old friends."

"I earnestly thank you. None of my old friends would do as much for me."

"Then I will call myself a new friend. And now let us talk of your plans. Tell me how you are situated."

This Tom did briefly.

"If I could get something to do," he concluded,

"we could get along very well, but I have tried all the stores in Hillsboro, and no clerks are wanted. I was offered a position by a blacksmith, but I don't care to learn that business."

"No, I should suppose not. Are you willing to leave home?"

"I shall have to, if I want employment."

"Then come to the city next Monday morning, and call on me. I have an idea, but I won't go into details till I have had a little time to think it over."

"Very well, sir," said Tom gladly, "I'll be sure to come, and I thank you heartily for your kindness to us."

"That's all right. I've make it a principle to help others to the extent of my ability. I was a poor boy myself, and know what it is to be pinched."

"You are not poor now?"

"No, I went to California when a young man, and struck luck. I suppose I should be considered comfortably rich. At any rate, I've got enough to keep me all my life. I don't need to work, but I can't be idle. So I am doing a little business in connection with mining stocks."

Mrs. Turner and Tom took their leave in excellent health and spirits,

"After all, mother, we have heard something to our advantage," said Tom.

"Yes, Tom. Good has sprung out of evil. Mr. Shapleigh is a very kind-hearted man. I wish there were more like him."

"What puzzles me is, who could have written that letter?"

"We won't think of it now, as good has come out of it."

"But it is some one who must want to injure us."

"We can afford to forget and forgive."

They remained till afternoon in New York, crossing the Brooklyn Bridge, just then completed, and riding up-town as far as Central Park. There was much to see, and Tom in particular enjoyed it.

"I should like to live in New York, mother," he said.

"I don't think I should, Tom. My quiet country life has unfitted me for such a noisy and exciting place. It is different with you. You are young and naturally enjoy excitement."

They reached home at three o'clock in the afternoon, and Tom unlocked the front door and entered the house. Neither he nor his mother suspected that it had been entered while they

were away, for there were no signs in the lower part of any visitors. But when Tom entered his own chamber he was surprised to find one of the bureau drawers open.

"That is strange," he said. "I am always particular to keep the drawers closed, but this morning I must have neglected it."

"You were in a hurry to leave for the city, Tom."

"I suppose that must be the explanation, though I could have vowed that I shut the drawer. I opened it to get out a collar. Then there's another thing. I left the trunk up against the side of the wall, and now it is at least a foot out in the room."

Mrs. Turner smiled.

"I suspect you were excited with the prospect of your journey," she said.

"Perhaps so," assented Tom doubtfully. "At any rate, I don't feel much alarmed. We haven't got enough property to worry about."

Tom went out and split some wood, and then kindled a fire in the kitchen stove, for he always saved his mother as much trouble as possible. At five o'clock the tea table was spread and they sat down to supper. They were both hungry, for since morning they had only eaten the plain lunch

they took with them. Besides the journey had produced its natural effect in sharpening their appetites.

They had about finished supper when a knock was heard at the back door.

Tom rose from the table and opened it.

He found the visitor to be a man whose seedy clothing and generally neglected appearance entitled him to the name of tramp.

“Good evening, young sir,” said the visitor. “I hope you will excuse my intrusion.”

“Certainly ; I suppose you want help.”

“My boy, you have struck it. My stomach is an aching void. I have not touched food since morning, and then I was served by a farmer's wife with a couple of doughnuts so hard that they nearly choked me.”

Tom smiled.

“We can treat you better than that. Won't you come in ?”

“Thank you.”

The tramp was provided with a seat by the stove, and when Tom and his mother had completed their evening repast, he was invited to eat at the table, where he was served with a cup of tea and a plate of cold meat, with a good allowance of bread and butter.

"I hope you'll excuse my appearance," he said humorously, "but my best clothes are in pawn."

"We are poor ourselves," said Mrs. Turner gently, "and we can make allowance for poverty in others."

"Thank you, ma'am. You're a lady. You deserve to prosper for you are kind to those who are in more need than yourself. I was not always as you see me. I have seen better days."

"You look strong and able to work," said Mrs. Turner.

"I am, and some time I may make up my mind to it. Now I feel like making a confession. I have been in this house before to-day."

Tom and his mother eyed him in surprise.

"How is that?" asked Tom. "My mother and I were in New York the greater part of the day, and we locked everything up."

"I got in at the kitchen window."

"What!" exclaimed Tom indignantly. "Did you mean to rob us?"

"No. I entered at the window because I saw another man do the same, and I had a curiosity to see what he was about."

"You saw another man get in at the window?"

"Yes."

"What was his appearance?"

“He was a large man, hair partly turned, a wrinkled face and small foxy eyes.”

“Why, that must have been Cousin Hannibal!” exclaimed Tom.

“I can hardly believe it,” said his mother. “He would not stoop to enter our house in that way.”

“He had to stoop when he got in at the window,” said the tramp humorously.

“Did you find him in the house?”

“You bet I did. He came down-stairs when he heard me.”

“But what was he doing up-stairs?”

“I will tell you, for I followed him up afterwards. He had taken the clothes out of an old trunk up-stairs, and was examining it. The clothes didn't look very valuable.”

“No, they belonged to a great uncle of mine. What did he say when you surprised him at his work?”

“He said you were relatives of his, and he had called expecting to find you at home. Seems to me he made himself pretty much at home. What did you say was the gentleman's name?”

“Hannibal Carter of Fordham. He is a cousin of my mother's.”

“He makes pretty free with his relatives.”

“What could he want of the trunk, Tom?” asked Mrs. Turner.

“You know he wanted to buy it. I can guess his object. He thought some of Uncle Brinton’s missing bonds might be hidden in it. I do believe, mother,” added Tom with a sudden inspiration, “that he wrote the decoy letter to get us out of the way, and give him a chance to search the trunk.”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

FIRST EXPERIENCES IN NEW YORK.

TOM was ready to forgive Mr. Carter for the decoy letter since there was a good prospect of his obtaining a situation in the city through the good offices of Mr. Shapleigh. He made preparation so far as he could, and, with his limited wardrobe in a small satchel, he took the cars for New York.

“How can I spare you, Tom?” said his mother, with tears in her eyes.

Tom's own eyes were moist.

“If I could get anything to do here,” he replied, “I would not go. Keep up your courage, and when I am prosperous I will send for you to come and live with me.”

The parting bore hardly on the mother, but Tom was realizing his youthful dreams, and going to live and work in the great city which has such a fascination for country boys.

As soon as he reached New York he went at once to Mr. Shapleigh's office.

“Good morning, Tom,” said that gentleman cheerfully. “So you have come, bag and baggage, eh?”

“Yes, sir.”

“I would take you into my own employ, but I should have no work for you. I have a book-keeper, and need no one else at present. But I have a cousin who is a silk importer, and has a large establishment on Greene Street. If you present a letter from me, I think he will give you a situation.”

“Thank you, sir.”

“But I shall not send you up to-day. You can take a week to look about the city, and become accustomed to the streets.”

“How am I to live in that time, sir? I didn’t bring much money from home.”

“How much did you bring?”

“Only a dollar,” answered Tom, embarrassed. Mr. Shapleigh smiled.

“That will hardly pay your expenses for a week in New York,” he said. “I shall have to help you. Mr. Jones, where do you board?”

“In West Twelfth Street,” answered the book-keeper.

“Is it an expensive place?”

“I pay eight dollars a week.”

"This would be too much for Tom. Probably you have a large room."

"Yes, sir. I think the young man will find Clinton Place cheaper."

"Do you know any house there which you can recommend?"

"I once lived at No. 201, Mrs. Downing's. He could get a small hall bedroom and board there for five dollars."

"That is better. Tom, here are seven dollars. Go and secure your boarding place, and then explore the city. Find out where the principal streets run, and how they are situated with reference to each other. You can come here this afternoon and report."

"Where is Clinton Place, sir?"

"I forgot. You are quite unacquainted with the city. Here is a small map. Mr. Jones will point out to you where Clinton Place runs out of Broadway, and you won't have any difficulty in finding it. Pay a week's board in advance, leave your satchel, and then you will feel settled."

"Thank you, sir."

Mr. Shapleigh turned to a letter which he was writing, and Tom understood that he was dismissed. He took his satchel, and, leaving the office, strolled up Broadway. He made slow

progress, for he stopped to look at so many objects which to him were new and interesting. At length he reached Clinton Place, and found the number indicated. It was a high stoop, three story house. He ascended the steps and rang the bell.

The door was opened by the landlady herself, a pleasant looking woman, evidently Scotch.

"What can I do for you, laddie?" she asked.

"I should like to get a room and board."

"I have a small hall bedroom on the upper floor, if that will suit you."

"I shall be easily suited."

"If you'll come upstairs I'll show you the room."

It was indeed small, containing a bedstead and washstand, and not much else. It was not nearly as nice as Tom's room at home, but it was a New York room and the thought that he was really now a denizen of the great city reconciled Tom to anything.

"What do you charge?" asked Tom anxiously.

"I have generally asked five dollars a week, but you look like a good steady boy, with little siller to spare" (Mrs. Downing retained some Scotch words such as she had been accustomed

to use in Glasgow), "and I'll take you for four dollars and a half."

"Then I will take the room. Here is the money for the first week."

"That is well!" said the landlady, much pleased. "I am sure we shall suit each other."

Tom handed her a five-dollar bill, and she returned him half a dollar.

"I suppose you have a place," said Mrs. Downing.

"Not yet, but I shall have next week."

"Are ye sure of that?"

"Yes; there is a gentleman down-town who will get me one. He wants me to take one week to get used to the city."

"And suppose ye don't succeed, how will you be able to pay your way?"

"The gentleman will look after me."

"Then you are in luck. There is no bureau here, but I will put one in. Have you a trunk?"

"No; I shall not need one at present," answered Tom, eying his modest stock of clothing.

"At twelve o'clock you can have some lunch. It is half past eleven now, so you may as well stay here till then."

Tom was already beginning to feel hungry, and accepted the suggestion. In half an hour the

bell rang, and he went down to the basement, where the lunch table was spread. A cup of tea, a little cold meat, and some bread and butter made a plain lunch, but he enjoyed it, for all were good of their kind.

Besides Tom and the landlady, there was a little old lady with copious white hair arranged in ringlets on either side of a thin, wrinkled face. She looked at Tom with evident curiosity.

"Have you a new inmate?" she asked, of Mrs. Downing.

"Yes ; the young gentleman has taken the small hall bedroom on the upper floor."

"Introduce me, please."

"Mr. Turner, this is Mrs. Holland."

"Are you a lawyer?" asked the old lady unexpectedly.

"No, ma'am," answered Tom in surprise.

"I thought perhaps you might be. I wish to consult an able lawyer. There is a large fortune which ought to have come to me, but my brother-in-law has taken it."

"I am very sorry to hear it."

"If you had been a lawyer, I would have asked you to write a letter to him. Do you think I could have him thrown into prison?"

"I am afraid I don't know enough about law to tell you."

"I see you are non-committal. All lawyers are. They want their fee. I am willing to pay for your services. Please take that as a retaining fee ;" and the old lady passed a nickel across the table to Tom, who took it with a look of perplexity. His eye sought that of the landlady.

"Take it," she said, "and it can afterwards be returned. The old lady isn't quite right here," and she tapped her forehead.

Mrs. Holland looked pleased.

"I am glad at last to have secured able legal advice," she said. "We will speak of this hereafter. Mrs. Downing, I am really pleased that we have a lawyer in the house."

Tom wanted to laugh, but hardly dared to do so.

After lunch Mrs. Downing said : "Don't mind the old lady. If she takes comfort from thinking you are a lawyer, and have charge of her case, let her think so."

"Has she really been deprived of her property ?"

"No ; her brother-in-law is a very nice gentleman, and pays the old lady's board, for she hasn't a cent of her own. But for him she would have

to go to the poorhouse. He cannot take care of her in his own house, because she insists on thinking that he has defrauded her."

"She may want to consult me again on her case."

"If she does, just tell her that all is going well, but you can't go into details. That will satisfy her."

"I don't know what my friends at home would say if they knew I was passing myself off as a New York lawyer."

"It is never worth while to combat the delusions of an insane person. You have to humor them."

After lunch Tom strolled about again, and about four o'clock fetched up at Mr. Shapleigh's office. He reported that he had found a home.

"That is well, Tom," said that gentleman. "Go about and learn all you can. You won't see me till Saturday, as I have to go to Buffalo on business. If you need any advice, or money, come and speak to Mr. Jones."

"Thank you, sir."

CHAPTER XXIX.

AT THE FOURTEENTH STREET THEATER.

AT the suppertable Tom found half a dozen other boarders to whom he was formally introduced. It is not necessary to mention all here. His attention was especially drawn to a young fellow of eighteen who sat on one side of him, and to a young lady sitting opposite whose face belied her youthful airs. The first was Ben Barrett, the second Miss Lucinda Vine. The old lady, Mrs. Holland, whose sight was poor, did not immediately recognize Tom. When, however, she heard him called by name, she asked with an air of interest, "Is there anything new about my case, Mr. Turner?"

"Nothing as yet," answered Tom.

"How do you think a writ of *habeas corpus* would do?"

"It might do," returned Tom diplomatically.

"I think so myself, but if you prefer to try *nisi prius* I shall defer to your judgment."

"You know a good deal about law, Mrs. Hol-

land," said Tom, trying to keep up a grave countenance.

"Oh, you needn't laugh," said the old lady, observing the smiles upon the faces of her fellow boarders. "Mr. Turner is my lawyer, and I am glad to have the services of so able an attorney."

"Thank you, Mrs. Holland. I hope to deserve your good opinion."

"Hallo!" said Ben Barrett, "is that your business? I didn't know we had a professional gentleman at our table. We ought to feel honored."

"I'll tell you about it afterwards," said Tom in a low voice. "Of course you understand that I am only humoring the old lady."

"Mr. Turner," said Miss Lucinda across the table, "are you about to sojourn in New York?"

"That is my intention," said Tom.

"I am very glad. You will be a great acquisition to our little circle."

"Now, Miss Lucinda, be careful what you say," said Ben Barrett with a broad smile. "You will make me jealous."

"You are a sad flirt, Mr. Barrett," returned Lucinda, who was evidently pleased with this banter.

"I have been taking lessons from you, Miss Vine."

“Now that is too bad, Mr. Barrett,” said Lucinda, tossing her head in great delight. “Mr. Turner, will you write in my album if I give it to you after supper?”

Tom thought Miss Vine in somewhat of a hurry, as their acquaintance was not yet half an hour long.

“As long as you don’t expect me to write anything original,” he answered.

“I should prefer something original, but you can do as you like. Mr. Barrett contributed some sweet lines.”

Ben Barrett winked at Tom, but Lucinda did not notice it, as she was very short-sighted.

“Perhaps he will help me,” said Tom.

“I would prefer that you should write out of your own mind.”

When supper was over, Miss Lucinda said: “Mr. Turner, will you not spend the evening in the parlor so that we may get better acquainted?”

“No, Miss Vine, I want Mr. Turner to go out with me,” said Ben Barrett.

“Some other evening, Miss Vine,” said Tom.

When they left the dining-room Ben invited Tom to his own room. It was a front apartment on the upper floor, but considerably larger than Tom’s.

"Well, Tom," said his new friend familiarly, "what do you think of our boarders?"

"Beginning with you?" asked Tom with a smile.

"Yes, if you like."

"I think you are very social and pleasant, and I am sure I shall enjoy your company."

"Good for you, Tom! Put it there!" and Bob extended his hand. "Now tell me, what are you expecting to do—besides your law business?"

"I have a friend down-town who thinks he can get me a place with Armstrong & Co., on Greene Street."

"I know; they are large silk importers."

"Yes, I believe so."

"I am working in a boot and shoe store down-town. I was in a store on Sixth Avenue, but my evenings were taken up. Down-town we close at six o'clock."

"Do you like the business?"

"I don't like any business, but I've got to live, you know. How much wages do you expect to get?"

"I don't know. I must get enough to pay my board, for I have nothing else to depend on."

"Have you had no experience in a store?"

"No."

"Then I am afraid you will be disappointed in the salary you will be offered. How much do you pay for board?"

"Four dollars and a half."

"Your washing will easily cost you fifty cents more. There are not many boys of your age and inexperience who get five dollars a week to begin with."

"But," said Tom perplexed, "I must send some money home to my mother."

"And get your clothes besides? You can't do it. Why, I get ten dollars a week, having been three years in the business, and it's hard scraping to make both ends meet."

"You pay more board?"

"Yes; I pay six dollars. That leaves me four dollars over. I tell you, Tom, it costs money to live in New York. But then you have your law business."

Tom smiled faintly. He was in no mood to appreciate a joke, for he was getting very anxious. It seemed as if instead of bettering himself by coming to New York he would actually be worse off. He could not reconcile himself to giving up the hope of helping his mother. If he could have earned five dollars a week in Hillsboro, all the money could have gone towards household ex-

penses and he would have felt comparatively rich. Now he must wait till he had seen Armstrong & Co. and ascertained what was to be his income.

“What do you think of Miss Lucinda?” asked Ben. “Isn’t she a charming young lady?”

“You are better able to judge than I. She doesn’t seem very young.”

“She’s thirty-five if she’s a day, though she passes for twenty-four. She’s a saleswoman in a large store on Fourteenth Street. I didn’t know it at first, for she doesn’t say much about her business, but one day I stepped into her store and heard her calling ‘C—a—sh! Cash here. Hurry up, No. 19.’ She seemed quite a different person from the sentimental young lady whom I meet at the table. She’ll be hinting to you to take her to the theater.”

“I can’t afford to go myself.”

“I went with her once. She furnished the tickets, though. She said they were given her, but I know that she bought them.”

“She must be partial to you.”

“No; but she liked to be seen at the theater with a young fellow as her escort. I have no doubt she represented that I bought the tickets and invited her.”

“I might go with her on those terms——”

"Then come with me to-night on the same terms."

"You are very kind, and I should like to go, but——"

"Well? What is the objection?"

"I shall not be able to return the compliment."

"I don't want you to. I understand your position, old fellow. But you are a stranger in the city, and I suppose have never been to a New York place of amusement?"

"No."

"Then you shall come with me. We will go to the Fourteenth Street Theater. There is a good show there."

Tom was very ready to accept. He had never been to see a play in his life, and the prospect was a dazzling one. Ben Barrett seemed to him a very cordial and kind friend, and he was glad to know him. The two went out about seven o'clock, and sauntered along towards the theater. Ben bought two reserved seats in the balcony at fifty cents each, which proved to afford a very good view of the stage. It is needless to say that Tom enjoyed the play. He was in fact spellbound, and it seemed to him that he was in a realm of enchantment.

Between the second and third act Ben said,

"Excuse me for five minutes, Tom. It is rather close here. I'll go out and get a breath of air. Will you come?"

"No, thank you."

"Very well! I'll be back soon."

He came back just as the curtain was rising in the third act. Tom was so much absorbed by the play that he did not notice two things. Ben's face was flushed and his breath smelled of whisky.

When the play was over they went out with the rest of the audience. Tom expected to go directly home, but Ben paused in front of a saloon and said, "Come in, Tom, and take a drink."

"Oh, no!" answered Tom, horror-struck, for he had been taught to abhor drinking.

"Oh, it won't do you any harm."

"I would rather not, Ben."

"Then wait here a minute."

Ben went in, but speedily reappeared, his breath smelling stronger than ever of whisky. He leaned heavily on Tom's arm.

"I hope you don't drink much, Ben," said Tom uneasily.

"No, not enough to hurt. It puts life into a fellow. Of course you're squeamish now. You'll soon learn to take a glass occasionally."

"I hope not," said Tom fervently. "I am

afraid you have taken too much already," for Ben staggered a little and leaned more heavily.

"Oh, it's all right, old fellow. I'll sleep it off. Be all right in the morning."

Tom helped Ben up to his room, and went to bed himself rather sober in spite of his evening's amusement. He was beginning to realize that the city with all its attractions was a dangerous place for those who were easily tempted.

CHAPTER XXX.

TOM GETS INTO BUSINESS.

ON Monday morning Tom, who had by this time got moderately familiar with the principal New York thoroughfares, made his way to Greene Street, and entered the large warehouse of Armstrong & Co. On the main floor he saw many clerks and salesmen, who were too busy to notice his appearance. Finally he went up to a young man, and asked: "Is Mr. Armstrong in?"

"In the office at the back part of the room," was the answer. "Did you wish to see him on business?"

"Yes, sir; I have a letter for him."

"Very well! You can go to the office. He may see you and he may not."

This was hardly encouraging, but Tom was resolved to carry out Mr. Shapleigh's order.

In a small office a man of middle size, with a large head, covered with iron-gray hair, was reading his morning mail.

"Is this Mr. Armstrong?" Tom asked.

The importer looked up.

"Yes ; from whom do you come ?"

"From Mr. Shapleigh."

"Ah ! Have you a letter from him ?"

"Yes, sir."

"Show it to me."

This is the letter, which we are privileged to read, though Tom was not.

"DEAR ARMSTRONG :—I send you a lad whom I want you to take into your employ. I am interested in him. He is poor, as we were at his age, and has a good mother whom he wants to help. Pay him six dollars a week, and if he is only worth half that at first, I will make up the other half.

Yours as ever,

"EDWIN SHAPLEIGH."

Mr. Armstrong looked up, after he had read the letter, and scanned Tom closely.

"What is your name ?" he asked.

"Thomas Turner."

"How old are you ?"

"Nearly sixteen."

"I take it you have no business experience ?"

"No, sir."

"Were you brought up in the city ?"

"No, sir ; in the country."

"Then you don't know the city streets."

"I have spent the last week by Mr. Shapleigh's advice in going about the city and making myself familiar with them."

"Where is Chambers Street ?"

"It runs on the north side of City Hall Park."

The importer asked Tom about the location of several other streets, and he answered correctly.

Mr. Armstrong nodded approvingly.

"You haven't wasted your time," he said.

"Have you known Mr. Shapleigh long ?"

"No, sir."

"He seems to take quite a strong interest in you."

"He is a very kind-hearted man," said Tom gratefully.

"He wants me to take you into my employ. Will you justify his recommendation ?"

"I will try to, sir."

"Then I will try you. I asked you about your knowledge of the streets, for you will be employed at first to run errands for the most part. You will receive six dollars a week."

Tom breathed a sigh of relief. He thought out of six dollars he might be able to spare a little to send home.

"Of course you won't earn it. I don't mind telling you that a part of it will be refunded to me by Mr. Shapleigh, as you have no claims on me at present."

"I am deeply grateful to Mr. Shapleigh," said Tom earnestly.

"I am glad you are. Ingratitude is a mean trait, but very common. One thing more. I want to encourage you a little, so I will let you read Mr. Shapleigh's letter."

He placed it in Tom's hands, and he read it.

"Are you surprised to hear that Mr. Shapleigh and I were poor boys?"

"Yes, sir."

"You need not be. Most of the men in this city who have succeeded in business or in the professions started as poor boys."

"That does encourage me, sir."

"There are the same chances now that there always were. Serve your employer well, learn business as rapidly as possible, don't fall into bad habits, and you'll get on."

"Thank you, sir."

"Take this card to Mr. Wallace. Any of the clerks will tell you where to find him."

"Yes, sir."

On the card Mr. Armstrong wrote: "Set this

boy to work. Perhaps it will be best at first to employ him as an errand boy. ARMSTRONG."

Mr. Wallace was a man of perhaps forty. He was the superintendent of the first floor. When Tom handed him the card, he arched his brows, and seemed a little surprised.

"So you are to be one of us?" he said.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I hope you won't give us any trouble. Come with me."

He took Tom down-stairs to the packing department, and introduced him to a man who seemed to have charge of the bundles.

"You can send this boy with small bundles," he said. "Give him the necessary instructions in each case."

"All right, Mr. Wallace."

Within an hour Tom was sent out with two parcels, one to be delivered in Fourteenth, the other in Eighteenth Street. The second parcel contained a dress pattern of silk, and was valuable. As he ascended the steps of a brown stone house bearing the number to which the parcel was addressed, a well-dressed man who had watched him sharply, followed and overtook him before he could ring the bell.

"Who is your parcel for, my boy?" he asked.

“For Mrs. Seymour, from Armstrong & Co.”

“So I supposed. I am Mr. Seymour. My wife is not at home, so you can deliver the parcel to me, and I will receipt for it.”

Tom was inexperienced in the ways of the world, but there was a subdued eagerness in the man's manner, and an evident lack of sincerity in his expression which excited his suspicion.

“How am I to know that you are Mr. Seymour?” he asked.

“Don't be a fool, boy!” said the man roughly. “You haven't been long in the city, I take it.”

“No.”

“So I supposed. A New York boy would have more sense. Just give me the bundle, or I shall complain of you to your employer.”

The more the man said, the more distrustful Tom became.

“I will ring the bell,” he said, “and if the servant says you are Mrs. Seymour's husband, I will give you the parcel.”

“You young fool, what makes you so squeamish? You insult me.”

“At any rate,” said Tom firmly, “I cannot give you the parcel. I am not allowed to deliver parcels in the street.”

The man uttered an exclamation, and went down the steps discomfited.

Tom rang the bell, and a neat servant answered it.

"Is Mrs. Seymour at home?" he asked.

"Yes."

"I have a bundle for her, but I would rather not deliver it except into her own hands."

"All right! Follow me up-stairs."

Tom followed the girl into a front room on the second floor, and there to his astonishment, was introduced to a white-haired lady of sixty as Mrs. Seymour.

"Is this parcel for you?" he asked.

"Yes, if you come from Armstrong's."

"Yes, madam. There was a man down in the street—a young man—who said he was your husband, and insisted upon my giving the parcel to him."

The old lady laughed heartily.

"So I have a young man for a husband, have I?" she said. "How old was he?"

"About thirty."

"I have been a widow for twenty years. If I ever do marry again, I shan't make myself ridiculous by marrying a man of half my age.

Depend upon it, child, he was a swindling adventurer."

"That is what I thought."

"It was fortunate for you that you did not give it to him. It would probably have lost you your place. Have you been long at Armstrong's?"

"This is my first morning."

"You are not a city boy?"

"No; I came only a week since from the country."

"Are you alone in the world?"

"No; I have a mother whom I am trying to help."

"That is very commendable. On that account, and because you had the sense to defeat the schemes of this swindler, I will make you a small present."

She drew from her pocket-book a two-dollar bill and handed it to Tom.

"Thank you," said Tom joyfully. "Now I shall have something to send to my mother."

"You are evidently a good boy. Give me your name."

"Thomas Turner."

"Take down my address, and if ever you are in trouble, call on me."

"Thank you."

Tom left the house and took a car down-town. When he had over a mile to go, he was allowed car fare. As he stepped upon the sidewalk, he came face to face with a man who stared at him in evident surprise.

It was Hannibal Carter.

CHAPTER XXXI.

“SHALL OLD ACQUAINTANCE BE FORGOT?”

“MR. CARTER?” called out Tom with a smile.

“How do you do?”

“Why—why, Tom,” stammered Hannibal,
“what brings you here?”

“I am working in the city.”

“You don’t say! Who are you working for?”

“Armstrong & Co., importers.”

“Is it a big firm?”

“Yes, sir.”

“How did you get the place?”

“A gentleman in the city got it for me.”

“But I didn’t know that you had any friends
in the city?”

“I didn’t have any, but I got a letter calling
for me to come to the city, and I came up—and
got the place.”

“You—got—a—letter?” said Hannibal, look-
ing queer. “From whom?”

“From Mr. James Elmore,” answered Tom.

"Do you know him?" he continued, looking Mr. Carter full in the face.

"Never heard the name before," answered Hannibal, wiping the perspiration from his brow.

"Neither had I ever heard of him. It seemed strange that he should have written to me."

"Well, it does appear a little odd," muttered Hannibal. "Perhaps he had heard of you."

"When mother and I called on him he said he'd never heard of us, and that he didn't write the letter."

"Sho!" ejaculated Mr. Carter, looking uneasy with his sense of secret guilt. "So he gave you a place, did he?"

"No, he didn't have anything for me, but we met another gentleman who took an interest in us, and recommended me to Mr. Armstrong."

"So it all turned out well after all. What do you do?"

"I run on errands mostly."

"And do you get enough to pay your way?"

"Yes, if I am very economical. By the way, Mr. Carter, have you come across any more property belonging to Uncle Brinton?"

"No, I haven't. It's very queer. He must have had some somewhere. You hain't found anything, have you?"

“Where should I be likely to find any property, Mr. Carter?”

“I thought maybe you might come across some in the old trunk.”

“The old trunk had been pretty well searched through,” said Tom with a keen look at Hannibal. “If there had been anything it would have turned up before now. I believe you were willing to give twenty-five dollars for the trunk, Cousin Hannibal.”

“I—no. I didn’t say so, did I?”

“You said you wanted it to remember Uncle Brinton by.”

“Well, I’ve changed my mind. Twenty-five dollars is a good deal of money, and you may as well keep the trunk.”

Tom was secretly amused, for he understood very well why the old trunk had lost its value in the eyes of Hannibal Carter.

“You must excuse me, Cousin Hannibal,” he went on, “but it won’t do for me to stand here any longer. I must be getting back to the store.”

Hannibal looked after Tom as he turned the corner.

“It’s very queer how things have turned out,” he soliloquized. “That boy has regularly stumbled into luck. He ought to be obliged to me for get-

ting him to the city—but he mustn't know I wrote the letter. No, he mustn't know that, or he might suspect something.

"I wonder whether the boy really found anything in the trunk," he asked himself with returning suspicion. "I don't believe he can earn enough to pay his way in the city. Maybe he has sold a bond, and got a reserve fund to fall back upon."

Mr. Carter was naturally suspicious, and the problem of the missing bonds still disturbed him not a little. Then he wondered whether Tom and his mother had heard anything of his secret visit, and of his examination of the trunk. There was only one man who could expose him, and that was the tramp who had followed him into the house through the window. It was certainly very unfortunate that he should be in the power of such a man. But after all, why need he fear? It was very doubtful if he would ever meet him again. The poor vagabond might be five hundred miles away. At any rate the fellow could not trace him, for Hannibal had taken good care not to mention his place of residence. So after all he need not borrow any trouble on this score.

"Good morning, old friend!" said a voice just behind him.

Hannibal turned suddenly, and his heart sank within him. There, eying him with a queer smile, was the very man of whom he was thinking—the man whom he fancied five hundred miles away.

“Startled you, did I?” asked the other with a mocking smile.

“I—you have the advantage of me!” returned Hannibal with a wild hope of bluffing off his unwelcome acquaintance.

“Have I? Well, I rather think I have,” answered the tramp with a peculiar smile. “It’s queer we should meet here—on Broadway, isn’t it?”

“I don’t know you.”

“No, you don’t—that is, you never heard my name, but I know you.”

“I don’t believe it,” retorted Hannibal, for he knew that he had not mentioned his name when they met at Hillsboro.

“I can guess at any rate. Suppose I should say that you are Hannibal Carter, of Fordham? How would that do for a guess?”

Hannibal stared at the other in terrified bewilderment, and became limp with stupefaction and alarm.

“How—did—you—find out?” he ejaculated.

“Then I guessed right?”

"Yes—es, that is my name."

"Never mind how I found out. I wanted to know who you were, and I took measures to ascertain. You didn't find anything in the trunk, did you?"

"Hush!" said Hannibal nervously.

"I suppose you don't want it talked about. It was rather a queer thing for a man like you to climb in through the kitchen winder——"

"Hush, hush, I say! I'm in a great hurry. I shall have to leave you."

Hannibal quickened his steps, but the tramp—to call him by his old name—kept up with him.

"I say, old fellow, have you had dinner?"

"N-no."

"Neither have I. Suppose you invite me to dine with you. I know a good cheap restaurant near by, where we can have a comfortable chat together."

Hannibal Carter was not in the habit of inviting his acquaintances to dinner where the invitations would entail expenditure of money, but he considered anything preferable to standing in the street with such a man, where it might possibly happen that some acquaintance (for he had quite a number in the city) might happen by.

“Well,” he muttered with forced resignation, “if it’s a cheap place I don’t mind.”

Within five minutes they were sitting at a table in a restaurant on Canal Street.

“I’m a leetle better dressed than when I met you last.”

“Ye-es.”

“I’m not dressed well enough to appear on Fifth Avenue, but I’ll do for the Bowery.”

Indeed the tramp—no longer a tramp—was dressed in a second-hand Prince Albert coat, somewhat the worse for wear, with vest and trousers to correspond, which he had picked up in Baxter Street.

“Have you had luck?” asked Hannibal.

“Well, I made a strike—found a pocket-book,” and the new acquaintance winked significantly.

Hannibal Carter groaned inwardly. He understood only too well. Here he was—good respectable man, church member too—consorting with a self-confessed thief, and even inviting him to dine with him.

“It’s terrible!” he thought, and again he pulled out his red silk handkerchief, and mopped his corrugated brow.

Suppose any one should come in who recognized

him, and knew the character of his companion. It would be fearful !

"I—I hope you'll lead a strictly honest life in future !" he said in a hortatory tone. "It is not too late for you to turn over a new leaf."

"Come, I like that. Did you ever hear of Satan rebuking sin ? There's a pair of us."

"I hope you don't mean to compare yourself with me," said Hannibal indignantly.

"No, I don't, for I'm not a hypocrite. But we mustn't neglect our dinner. I say, waiter, have you any roast turkey and cranberry sauce ?"

"Yes, sir."

"Bring some vegetables with it, and a bottle of ale."

"I belong to the temperance society," said Hannibal hastily.

"I don't. However, it'll be I that's drinking, not you."

"But it won't be consistent for me to pay for a bottle of ale for you to drink."

"Consistent or not, I reckon you'll have to do it. If you don't drink ale, you don't know what's good. Let me order another bottle for you."

"No, no !" exclaimed Hannibal, holding up both hands in horror.

"Just as you say. Seems to me you draw fine

distinctions. It doesn't seem to me any worse to drink a bottle of ale than to climb into another man's house—when he is away—through the kitchen winder."

"For Heaven's sake, stop!" implored Hannibal, in an agony of apprehension.

So the dinner proceeded, and, though it was a cheap restaurant, Hannibal's unwelcome acquaintance managed to run up a bill of nearly a dollar. At length he rose from the table, apparently satisfied, and allowed Hannibal to go on his way, disgusted and annoyed.

"I'll come to see you some time in Fordham," were his last words.

"I hope I shall never set eyes on you again," was Hannibal's inward ejaculation.

CHAPTER XXXII.

TOM'S EYES SERVE HIM TO GOOD PURPOSE.

TOM had written a letter home, and was just taking out the two-dollar bill which had been given him by Mrs. Seymour, to inclose it, when Ben Barrett came into the room.

"Hallo!" said Ben, espying the note, "where are you sending money?"

"To my mother."

"How much?"

"Two dollars."

"Whew! you are getting to be rich. You don't mean to say you have saved that out of your wages?"

"No. I had it given to me by a lady to whom I carried goods."

"Just introduce me, please. Do you know, Tom, I'm awfully hard up for money?"

"I don't see why you need to be. You get considerably more than I do."

"Well, I don't know how it is, but here it is

Thursday night, and I haven't got but a nickel left, and no more coming in till Saturday."

"You can't be a very good manager, Ben."

"I could manage if I had a decent salary," rejoined Ben gloomily. "I'll tell you what I think I'll do when I get my week's pay."

"What?"

"Buy a lottery ticket."

"I think that will be foolish," said Tom, who had been brought up to distrust lotteries, and all forms of gambling. "There isn't much chance of a prize, and twenty chances to one you will lose your money."

"I don't know about that. I was reading a day or two since about a conductor on the Third Avenue road who invested a dollar and drew a hundred. It would be pretty nice to draw a prize of a hundred dollars, eh, Tom?"

"All the same I wouldn't advise you to invest in a ticket."

"Nothing venture, nothing have! I'd like to buy a ticket to-night. There's a drawing on Saturday. You haven't got a dollar you could lend me, Tom?"

Tom shook his head.

"I'll make it all right Saturday. Now if you would just sent your mother one dollar, and lend

me the other, you could send the second Sunday."

Tom looked at Ben steadily.

"Do you really want me to keep back the money from my mother in order to let you buy a lottery ticket?"

Ben flushed a little.

"Of course I would pay you back," he said.

"No; I couldn't do it even for a friend."

"Oh, well, do as you like!" said Ben pettishly.

At this point there was a knock at the door, and Rosalie, the servant, entered.

"A boy with your washing, Mr. Barrett," she said.

"Tell him to come here."

A boy about twelve presented himself with a bundle of clothes.

"All right!" said Ben carelessly. "Lay the bundle down on the bed."

"Would you be kind enough to pay me for them?" asked the boy.

Ben looked amazed.

"Seems to me you're in a terrible hurry," he said with a frown.

"Mother needs the money. Her rent comes due to-morrow."

"How much do I owe her?"

"For this week and last—a dollar."

“ Well, I can’t pay it to night. I’ve only a nickel.”

The boy looked disappointed, and his lip trembled.

“ I don’t know what we shall do,” he said. “ The landlord won’t wait for the rent. He will turn us out.”

“ That doesn’t concern me ! ” said Ben.

Tom was indignant.

“ Are you not ashamed, Ben ? ” he said. “ You’ve been squandering your money, and now you want to buy a lottery ticket, and leave unpaid the poor woman who washes for you.”

“ I don’t want any of your lectures,” retorted Ben angrily. “ If I had the money I’d pay it, but I haven’t got it.”

“ You might have had it.”

“ Well, I haven’t, and that’s all there is about it.”

“ I’ll tell you what I’ll do. I’ll lend you the money to pay this boy, and you shall pay me back Saturday.”

“ A minute ago you wouldn’t lend me any.”

“ Not to buy a lottery ticket, but this is different.”

“ Well, if you choose to do it you can ; but if you had helped me to buy a lottery ticket and I

had won a prize I would have given you ten dollars for one."

"I would rather help you pay this bill."

"You're a queer fellow. I'm not the only one that delays paying."

"You don't seem to consider that it may be inconvenient for your laundress."

Ben shrugged his shoulders. He did not care to continue the discussion.

"I wish I had money enough to go to the theater to-night," he said.

"I shouldn't mind going myself."

"Then suppose we go."

"I have lent you all my spare money."

Ben looked significantly at the letter which Tom had written to his mother. If it had been his he would have opened it and taken out the two-dollar bill.

"Let us go out to walk, then," he said.

"Very well!"

The two boys went out.

"It's awfully inconvenient having no money," said Ben.

"Then you had better manage better next week."

"I hate such close management."

"So do I," said Tom, smiling; "but till I get

a larger income I shall have to make up my mind to it."

The boys walked on till they neared the corner of Twenty-Third Street. On the east side of the street, and not far away was a large billiard room.

"How are you, Barrett?" said a voice.

Ben turned and recognized a friend of about his own age—Stephen Kidder.

"Good evening, Steve!" said he joyfully.

"This is one of my fellow lodgers—Tom Turner."

"Glad to know you, Mr. Turner."

"Thank you."

"What do you say to a game of pool, Ben?"

"I'd like it ever so much, but I have no money. Paid my last dollar to my washerwoman."

"Whew! you're growing virtuous. Well, I've got a little money. It's my birthday, and the governor tipped me to the extent of five dollars. So come up, and we'll have a good time."

"All right!" answered Ben joyfully.

"Won't your friend come up too?"

"No, thank you," said Tom. "I don't play pool."

"We'll teach you."

"Never mind! I'll keep on my walk."

To tell the truth, neither of the boys were sorry that Tom did not accept the invitation. He looked

too sober and steady to suit them as a companion. So, with a civil but unmeaning expression of regret, the two boys went up-stairs, and Tom was left to pursue his way alone.

It was a bright, pleasant evening, and Tom, not feeling tired, sauntered along past the Fifth Avenue Hotel, and still farther along past Delmonico's, by the Sturtevant and Gilsey Houses, and up as far as Wallack's Theater, as it was then.

Tom was in a thoughtful mood, and walked on slowly with his head down.

Just in front of the theater his eyes were attracted by something sparkling on the sidewalk. It was small, and he would not have noticed it if his eyes had not been exceptionally good. He stooped over and picked up a brilliant stone, which he felt sure must be a diamond, though he had never to his knowledge seen one before.

"It must be valuable," thought Tom. "I will take care of it."

It occurred to him that it might be worth about ten dollars. This, to him, seemed a very large price for a small stone, even if it was a diamond.

"I wish I could see the owner," he thought. "I am afraid I shall have some trouble in restoring it to the loser."

He put it in his upper vest pocket for safety,

and, turning slowly, went back to his lodging house. Tom had not yet learned to keep late hours, and generally went to bed before ten o'clock.

It was midnight before Ben came home. He had had a jolly evening, but the next morning his head ached, and he was very unwilling to get up.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE SHOPLIFTER.

THE next day Tom rose bright and early and took half a mile walk before breakfast. The natural consequence was that his eyes were bright, and his cheeks glowing with health, as he sat down with a good appetite to breakfast.

“ Really, Mr. Turner, you are looking unusually well this morning,” said Miss Lucinda Vine, whose sallow face was never brightened by color.

“ Thank you, Miss Vine,” said Tom, who had by this time learned to return compliments. “ You must not flatter me.”

“ Really, Mr. Turner, I am sincere. I would give a good deal for your healthy color.”

“ That is because he is young, my dear,” said old lady Holland. “ Twenty years ago you might have been blooming.”

“ Twenty years ago ?” repeated Miss Vine with concealed annoyance. “ I was only six years old at the time. I can’t remember so far back. I feel that I am getting old.”

"Nonsense, my dear," said the terrible old lady. "You ain't forty yet, be you?"

"I'd like to ring the old cat's neck," thought the annoyed Lucinda. "No, I should say not," she replied sharply. "I shall be forty if I live fourteen years longer. Your eyes must be very much affected, my *dear* Mrs. Holland."

"Perhaps they be," answered the old lady mildly. "There's a great difference about folks lookin' old. I always thought you were thirty-seven or eight."

Miss Vine was really thirty-six, but the old lady's near guess made her wince.

"Look out, Mrs. Holland, or I shall be calling you a hundred," she said with considerable acerbity in her tone.

"Sometimes I feel as old as that, my dear," said Mrs. Holland, who was not aware that she had offended the younger lady. "Mr. Turner, is there anything new about my case?"

"No, ma'am."

"What court are you going to take it to?"

"I will be guided by you, Mrs. Holland."

"Then we'll try the Supreme Court. Yes, Mrs. Downing, I will take another cup of tea, a leetle mite stronger than the last."

Here Ben Barrett came down-stairs, and mood-

ily took his seat at the breakfast table. His eyes looked dull, his cheeks were tinged with an unnatural flush, and his head ached.

“What time did you get home, Ben?” asked Tom.

“About one.”

“Oh fie, Mr. Barrett,” said Miss Lucinda playfully. “That is positively shocking. If I knew your mother I would write her how dissipated you are getting.”

“Suppose I look upon you as a mother,” said Ben, winking at Tom.

“Really, if you were three or four years old I might consent, but I shall prefer, as matters stand, to be considered as an older sister.”

“I don’t like older sisters. They are too fond of bossing.”

“I would promise to be very gentle with you, Mr. Barrett,” simpered Miss Vine.

“Then you can adopt Tom. He won’t give you half so much trouble as I.”

“By the way, Miss Vine,” said Tom, “are you any judge of precious stones?”

“Why, Mr. Turner?”

“Because I found one last evening in front of Wallack’s Theater. I think it is a diamond.”

“Do let me see it! I dote on diamonds.”

Tom produced the stone from his pocket.

“ Oh, what a beautiful diamond ! ” exclaimed Miss Vine enraptured.

“ Is it valuable ? ”

“ It must be worth five hundred dollars at least.”

“ You don't mean it ? ” ejaculated Tom.

“ Yes, I am sure of it. I have a friend who is a jeweler, and he has often shown me the diamonds in his stock.”

“ What's that ? ” said Ben, becoming interested.

“ A five hundred dollar diamond ! ”

“ I am sure it is worth that.”

“ I say, Tom, let's sell it and divide.”

“ It isn't mine,” answered Tom shortly.

“ You won't try very hard to find the owner.”

“ Yes, I shall.”

“ If you don't that will be a good sum for each of us.”

“ Why should I divide with you ? ” asked Tom, who was disgusted with the other's selfishness.

“ Because you wouldn't have found it but for me.”

“ I don't see that.”

“ I invited you to go out to walk.”

“ And left me at the corner of Twenty-Third Street.”

“ Do you mean to keep it all to yourself ? ”

“ No, I mean to return it to the owner.”

“ Ah, of course! We all understand that,” sneered Ben.

“ It would be a nice present for a lady friend,” suggested Lucinda slyly.

“ You don’t need it, Miss Vine,” said Tom, who had made progress in the art of compliment. “ You know ‘ beauty unadorned is adorned the most.’ ”

“ You sad flatterer,” said the young lady delighted. “ I see that I stand no chance.”

Tom and Ben set out together to ride down-town.

“ Tom,” said Ben smoothly, “ if you’ll trust me with the stone I’ll take it into a jeweler’s and inquire the value.”

“ I don’t want to know the value,” returned Tom.

“ But it may be yours. You probably won’t find the owner.”

“ I will try to, at any rate. If I can’t then I will take it to Tiffany’s or somewhere else and inquire what it is worth.”

“ But I could find out for you to-day.”

“ I won’t trouble you,” said Tom coldly. He understood that it would be dangerous to part company with the diamond to a fellow of as easy principles as Ben.

“ Perhaps you don’t want to trust me with it,” said Ben angrily.

“ I think it will be safest with me.”

“ I didn’t think you were so suspicious, Tom.”

“ You can call me that, if you like. I shall not rest till I return the diamond to its owner.”

“ Then good morning ! ” and Ben jumped out of the car in high dudgeon.

“ If I let Ben have it I should never see it again,” thought Tom. “ He may not be naturally dishonest, but the temptation to dispose of it would be too strong for him.”

Tom entered the store on time as he always did. He held that his time within certain hours belonged to his employer, and he always started from his lodging house early enough to reach the store in good season.

Once in the warerooms his mind was fixed on his business, and he forgot all about the diamond, which, however, was safe in his pocket.

Towards the middle of the afternoon a large lady, showily dressed, entered the store, and went up to the silk counter.

She gave the salesman a good deal of trouble, requiring him to unroll a variety of silk patterns, giving the preference to those that commanded

a high price. A plain looking girl, who seemed to be a humble friend, accompanied her.

Tom whose duties carried him to different parts of the store, chanced to have his attention drawn to this lady, and he distinctly saw her put a piece of silk and a roll of ribbon into a capacious pocket at her side.

He stood as if spellbound, for he was not acquainted with the ways of female shoplifters, and was inexpressibly astonished to find a handsomely dressed lady guilty of theft.

"I don't see anything I want," said the lady after she had accomplished her purpose, "or rather I haven't time to look farther. I promised to call at Mrs. Astor's at three—you remember, Clara?"

"Yes, ma'am," answered the attendant.

"Thank you for your attention, sir," went on the lady urbanely to the salesman whose time she had occupied for half an hour.

Saying this, she turned and walked slowly towards the door.

"What shall I do?" thought Tom, excitedly.

He knew that it was a serious thing to accuse a rich lady, as she seemed to be, of theft, but his duty to his employer was plain.

He hurried to a floorwalker and communicated what he had seen.

The floorwalker stepped forward hastily.

"Madam," he said, "I must request you to step to the back of the store."

"What do you mean, sir?" demanded the lady haughtily.

"You had better let me tell you there."

"This is an outrage—unheard of!" exclaimed the lady, but she seemed nervous.

"Now what is it, sir?" she asked, when they reached the superintendent's office.

"This boy saw you put a silk pattern and a roll of ribbon in your pocket."

"That boy! Do you know who he is?"

"He is one of our employees."

"He used to be in my employment, but I discharged him for stealing. Now he wants to be revenged on me."

"Is this true?" asked the floorwalker, bewildered.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

TOM IS BADLY TREATED.

“ I NEVER saw this lady before in my life,” said Tom indignantly.

“ What audacity ! ” exclaimed the lady, raising both hands in assumed surprise. “ You know the boy, do you not, Clara ? ”

“ Certainly, mum,” answered Clara.

“ Is it not true that he was once in my employ ? ”

“ Yes, mum.”

The floorwalker, who was a weak man, easily influenced by one whom he regarded as his superior in social position, became suspicious.

“ Perhaps,” said Tom composedly, “ you will tell me what my name is, since, as you say, I once lived with you.”

“ I don’t know what you call yourself now,” said the woman—for she is not entitled to be called a lady—“ but you once passed by the name of Tom Marks.”

It was a happy chance for her that she happened to hit upon the name of Tom. For Tom it was

unfortunate. The floorwalker's suspicions deepened.

"He now calls himself Tom Turner," he volunteered.

"Very likely! He has only changed his last name," said the woman with triumphant malice. "I hope you won't place too much confidence in him."

"I am obliged to you for the caution," said the floorwalker. "Be kind enough to remain here till I report the case to the superintendent."

"If absolutely necessary I shall do so, but I have promised to call upon Mrs. Astor. I should not like to keep her waiting."

"Mr. Weeks," said Tom resolutely, "I insist upon this woman being searched. I saw her secrete goods, taken from the counter, in her pocket."

"Sir," said the woman haughtily, "I shall hold you responsible for any indignity. I leave you to judge for yourself whether the testimony of a boy whom I have discharged from my house for theft is reliable."

"Wait a moment," returned the floorwalker. "I will speak to the superintendent."

"Please detain us as short a time as possible."

"I will. Mr. Wallace, this lady charges Thomas Turner with theft while in her employ."

“Ha!” exclaimed Wallace, looking severely at Tom.

The fact was the superintendent was anxious to get his own son into Armstrong’s, and it occurred to him that if Tom were discharged a place would be made for his boy.

“I beg your pardon, sir,” said Tom. “It is I who charge this woman with shoplifting. ‘I saw her take some silk and ribbon from the counter and put it in her pocket.’”

“Sir,” said the woman, “this is simply infamous. The boy has a grudge against me, and takes this way of gratifying it. I am a friend of Mrs. Astor, and count the best ladies in the city in my set.”

Mr. Wallace looked at her and hesitated. He knew that when such a charge was brought it was his duty to investigate, but he stood in awe of the showily dressed woman, and was impressed by her tone.

“Probably you will have no objection to prove your innocence by having your pocket examined.”

“Clara, put your hand in my pocket and see if you can find anything that does not belong there.”

The attendant thrust in her hand, and of course brought it out empty.

"There is nothing there," she said.

"Now are you satisfied?" asked the woman.

"I am not," said Tom. "This young woman is her confederate."

"I will not stay here to be insulted," cried the woman resolutely. "I advise you, sir, to discharge this boy or I shall report to my friends that it is not safe for them to deal here."

"You can go, madam," said the superintendent. "I regret that you have been subjected to inconvenience."

"Thank you, sir. You are a gentleman. Come, Clara, let us go."

"Not quite yet," said a small man, of quiet exterior, who had been listening to the conference. "Mrs. Wallace is a well known shoplifter. I know her well. She must be searched."

The woman turned pale and essayed to contradict the detective, but he went resolutely forward and thrust his own hand into her pocket, drawing out the stolen articles.

"What do you say to this?" asked the detective. "If you had bought them they would have been rolled up."

"The boy must have put them in my pocket," said the woman with bravado. "It is a conspiracy against me."

Mr. Weeks looked petrified. He had taken the woman at her own valuation, and really thought that in her he saw one of the famous Four Hundred, who are said to shed luster on the fashionable world of New York.

"Madam," said the detective, "this is a little fiction of yours. Unfortunately I know you of old."

"I will pay for the articles," she said. "I have no occasion for them, but if that will be satisfactory I am willing to purchase them, though I can't understand how they got into my pocket."

Greatly to the disgust of the detective and Tom she was allowed to do this.

As she swept out of the store she said, "Keep your eye on that boy! He can't be trusted."

"Return to your work, boy!" said Wallace harshly.

"Very well, sir."

"The story this lady tells bears heavily upon you. It shall be investigated."

"I wish nothing better," returned Tom, smarting under his injustice. "Why is it that you take the word of a professional thief against mine?"

"Don't be impertinent, boy. It will do you no good."

Tom went back to his work, but he felt that he had been very badly treated. He had tried to be faithful and loyal to his employer, but so far from his loyalty being appreciated, this baseless charge of a shoplifter had been credited, and he found himself under suspicion.

“Mr. Wallace, it appears to me that you are unjust to the boy,” said the detective.

“I feel competent, Mr. Green, to manage my own affairs,” returned the superintendent superciliously.

“Perhaps so,” returned the other significantly, “but all the same you would have let this woman go with her booty but for me.”

“I don’t care to discuss the matter with you, sir. You take too much upon yourself.”

“Do I? I am ready to account to Mr. Armstrong for my conduct.”

Superintendent Wallace bit his lips. He wished he could discharge the detective, but he knew very well that this would not be permitted, and without a word he turned to his desk. The detective’s defense of Tom, however, only incensed him the more against the boy for whom he had a causeless hatred, and brought upon our hero a genuine misfortune.

When the business of the day was closed, and

the various employees were getting ready to leave the store, a cash boy came up to Tom with a message.

"The superintendent wishes to see you," he said.

Tom repaired to that functionary's desk with a premonition of evil.

"Did you wish to see me, sir?" he asked.

"Yes," was the abrupt reply. "You can go to the cashier's desk and call for your week's pay."

"But it is not Saturday night, sir."

"You don't appear to understand. Your services are no longer required."

"Why not?" asked Tom, his face flushing with indignation. "Is it because I detected a woman in shoplifting?"

"She says you put the articles in her pocket."

"It is false. The detective recognized her as a well known shoplifter."

"Detectives are human, and make mistakes sometimes," sneered Wallace. "Besides, even admitting that she is what she is charged to be, she says you were once in her employ, and were dismissed for theft."

"Do you believe a woman like her, Mr. Wallace?"

"At any rate we cannot afford to employ any one who is even suspected of dishonesty."

"I was employed by Mr. Armstrong himself, and I will not take a discharge except from him."

"You won't?" exclaimed Wallace angrily.
"We'll see about that."

"I will go and speak to him."

"You can't. He has left the city for a week," said the superintendent triumphantly.

"Where is he?"

"I do not choose to inform you. You can go to the cashier as I told you."

"I shall not go to him, nor will I accept my discharge."

"You are without exception, the most impudent boy we ever had in the place. If you don't go, I will have you ejected from the store."

There is nothing so aggravating as a sense of injustice. Tom, as he left the superintendent's desk and walked slowly from the building, felt a deep sense of wrong. Near the door he met the detective.

"Mr. Green," he said, "I'm discharged."

"By the superintendent?"

"Yes."

"It's a shame! But don't be down-hearted.

When Mr. Armstrong comes back I will see that the wrong is made right."

"I am glad I have one friend," said Tom, but for all that he felt very much depressed.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF WEALTH.

"WHAT makes you look so sober, Mr. Turner?" asked Miss Vine at the supper table.

"Do I look sober?" asked Tom, smiling faintly.

"Yes. Do you know what I thought?"

"I can't guess."

"Either you are in love, or you have lost your diamond."

"I shall not be foolish enough to fall in love till I am older. As to the diamond I still have it."

"Oh, do let me see it again."

"I will show it to you, but I can't let it go out of my hands. It does not belong to me, and it might get lost."

"You are very suspicious," said Ben Barrett with a sneer.

"No; I am only prudent. It is so small that it might easily fall to the floor, and get lost."

Tom took out the diamond, and held it so that it could be plainly seen by all at the table.

"You haven't got any clew to the one who lost it, Mr. Turner?"

"No ; I wish I could find out."

"Oh, of course !" said Ben in an aggravating tone, which Tom did not see fit to notice.

"Have you looked in the papers to see if it has been advertised ?"

"No. I ought to have thought of that."

"We have two morning papers here," said the landlady. "I will show them to you after supper. But I think it is more likely to be advertised to-morrow morning. The loss might not have been discovered till this morning."

The two papers were carefully examined by Tom after dinner, but he could see no advertisement relating to the missing stone.

"Are you going out this evening, Turner?" asked Ben rather abruptly.

"No ; I think not at present."

Indeed Tom didn't care to go out with Ben. He naturally resented the sneering manner in which his once cordial friend had spoken to him about the diamond.

About eight o'clock Ben returned to the house, and went up to Tom's room. Tom was reading a magazine by the flickering light of a kerosene lamp, there being no gas jet in his apartment.

He was followed into the room by a young man of perhaps twenty-three, dressed in flashy attire.

"My friend, Mr. Parker, Tom," said Ben in a jaunty tone.

"I am glad to meet you," said Tom politely, though he did not especially fancy the looks of the new-comer.

"It's the strangest thing in the world," Ben continued, talking rapidly; "my friend Parker is the owner of the diamond you found last evening."

"Indeed!" said Tom suspiciously.

"Yes," said the young man. "You see I went to Wallack's last evening, and had this diamond set in a cravat pin. It must have fallen out, but I never missed it on my honor till I came to dress this morning. I was going to put it away, don't you know, for I don't wear it every day. It was a great shock, I assure you, when I discovered my loss. I never expected to see it again, but as luck would have it I fell in with Ben this evening, and when I informed him of my loss he told me at once that you had found the stone."

Tom eyed the young man steadily. Country boy as he was, he saw that Mr. Parker was trying to swindle him.

"Of course I'm awfully obliged to you, and

though I can't afford to pay a suitable reward, being short of money, here's five dollars you're quite welcome to."

As he spoke, Parker drew forth a five-dollar bill from his vest pocket and tendered it to Tom.

"You earned that five dollars easy, Tom," said Ben in the same jaunty way. "So all you've got to do is to hand over the stone to my friend Parker, and you'll have no more bother about it."

Tom did not make any movement towards following out this suggestion.

"I suppose, Mr. Parker," he said, "you have the gold setting from which the stone fell out?"

"I've got it at home," said Parker, in a tone of embarrassment.

"It would have been better to bring it here. I suppose you can prove that you had such a pin."

"I hope you don't doubt my friend's word," blustered Ben.

"At what did you value the diamond?" continued Tom.

"I can't say. It was given me by a rich aunt."

"But were you never tempted to show it to a jeweler and get him to value it for you?"

"Yes, I did once. Let me see—where was it? Oh, down in Maiden Lane. The jeweler thought

it might be worth five hundred dollars. I ought to give you more than five dollars, and so I will when I get my next month's pay."

Still Tom made no move towards giving up the diamond.

"Aren't you going to give it back to the owner?" demanded Ben impatiently.

"Yes, when I find him."

"You have found him."

"I shall need to be convinced of that."

"I see you want to keep it yourself."

"I mean to do it till I am sure that I have found the owner," returned Tom with spirit.

"Parker, if I were you, I would summon a policeman."

"You can do so if you wish," said Tom coolly.

"You'll hear from us again," said Ben angrily.

"Yes, you'll hear from us again," chimed in Parker. "It's a shame to keep a man's property from him."

Tom did not choose to answer. The attempt at imposition was so transparent that he did not care to discuss the matter.

"Just show me the stone," said Parker, an instant later. "Perhaps it is not mine after all."

Tom reflected that it might be snatched from him, and that he would be helpless against two

who were bent on securing the diamond at all hazards, and declined.

"I say, Ben, what sort of a fellow is this?" demanded Parker rudely.

"You can judge for yourself," returned Ben, with an ugly look.

"Good evening," said Tom with dignity. "I should prefer to be alone."

They went out, slamming the door after them, and indulged in a whispered conference in the hall. Presently Tom heard them going downstairs. He began to realize that it was an uncomfortable responsibility to have so valuable an article in his possession. He heartily wished that it was safe in the owner's hands. The most painful thing was the duplicity and downright knavery of Ben Barrett, whose cupidity had evidently been excited, and who had been scheming to deprive Tom of the stone ever since he knew Tom had found it. Tom had felt disposed to like Ben, and had found him a cordial and agreeable companion, but the light which he had now gained as to his character destroyed all friendly feeling.

When our hero went to bed later on, he transferred the diamond from the upper vest pocket to his purse; not that he was suspicious, but he

thought it might readily fall out of the pocket, and it would not do to incur risks.

Then the question arose as to what he should do with the purse. This was the more important, since, though there was a lock on the door, he had no key, and was unable to fasten it. After a little consideration he decided, contrary to his custom, to wear his socks to bed, and to stow away the purse in one of them.

"I don't think any one will search for them there," he said to himself.

At ten o'clock Tom retired. Usually he went to sleep at once, and did so this evening. But probably the thought of the diamond was on his mind, and caused him to feel restless. At any rate about twelve he suddenly opened his eyes, and almost instantly became aware that there was some one in the room. He did not stir, but tried to make out who it was. As his eyes became accustomed to the dim light, he recognized Ben in the intruder. Ben had his back to the supposed sleeper, and was searching in the pocket of Tom's vest.

Of course he was looking for the diamond.

Tom was shocked, and could not feel thankful enough that he had had the prudence to put away the stone in a safer place.

Should he speak? No, he decided not to do so, for he preferred not to shame Ben. He waited till the midnight visitor had a chance to examine the pocket thoroughly.

“Confound it!” he heard Ben say. “Where can he have put it? Did he get suspicious, I wonder?”

Tom made no sign, and Ben next examined the other pockets in the vest, and then those in the pantaloons.

By this time he thought it time to interfere with the dishonest schemes of his visitor, and coughed.

Ben dropped the clothes and swiftly left the room, fearing that Tom was on the point of waking.

Tom rose and put the washstand before the door, though he did not apprehend any further visit from his neighbor.

“I never can trust Ben after that,” he said to himself. “I must get the diamond out of my hands as soon as possible, or I shall lose it.”

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE HERALD ADVERTISEMENT.

WHEN Tom rose the next morning he jumped out of bed briskly to get ready to go to the store, when the sad thought occurred that he was out of employment.

He had half finished his meal when Ben came in and took a seat beside him. Ben eyed him sharply to see if Tom showed any evidence of having seen him the night previous in his room. But Tom greeted him as usual, though his manner was cold and he did not respond to Ben's efforts to enter into conversation.

"Going to do anything about the diamond to-day, Tom?" asked Ben nonchalantly.

"I can't tell yet."

"Let me see it again."

"I would rather not."

"What am I to tell my friend Parker?" asked Ben, lowering his voice.

"That he can't get the stone from me by trickery," answered Tom, his eyes flashing.

“I see you don’t intend to part with it,” rejoined Ben with a sneer.

“Not to an adventurer—or a thief.”

“What do you mean?” demanded Ben with a quick flush.

“What I say. Now let us drop the subject.”

By this time Tom had concluded his meal, and rose from the table, not waiting, as he usually did, for Ben’s company.

“Hold on, Tom,” said Ben. “As soon as I’ve eaten those buckwheat cakes I’ll be ready to go with you.”

“I am in a hurry.”

“Mr. Turner doesn’t seem to be in good spirits,” said Miss Vine.

“No, he’s got diamond on the brain,” returned Ben.

“How is that?”

“He’s afraid some one will come and claim the diamond.”

“I am sure you misjudge him. He seems to be the soul of honor,” said Mrs. Downing, the landlady.

“A diamond is a big temptation,” Ben responded with an unpleasant smile.

“I didn’t see any advertisement in the papers,”

said Miss Lucretia. "Perhaps the owner hasn't yet discovered his loss."

"I don't think he'll recover his diamond," remarked Ben. "I am pretty sure I know the person who lost it."

"Who is it?" asked Miss Vine, her curiosity aroused.

"A friend of mine named Parker."

"He must be rich to own such a diamond."

"No, he is only a clerk on a salary, but it was given to him by a rich relative."

"You don't mean it? Why doesn't he come and tell Mr. Turner?"

"He did—last evening."

"Well?"

"Tom flatly refused to give it to him. He wouldn't even show it to him."

"What proof has your friend that the diamond is his?"

"Tom found the diamond in front of Wallack's Theater. That same evening Parker attended the theater, wearing the diamond in his shirt bosom. He did not discover his loss till next morning."

"How did he discover that Mr. Turner had found it?"

"I met him last evening after supper, and he

mentioned his loss to me. Then I told him about the diamond found by Tom Turner. Of course he came round at once and asked Tom civilly to give it to him. He offered to pay him five dollars as a reward for finding it, but it was no go."

"Any one would be glad to pay five dollars for such a diamond," said the landlady significantly. "Did you ever see your friend wearing it?"

"Plenty of times."

"Then why didn't you recognize it when Mr. Turner showed it at the table?"

"It never occurred to me. You see I didn't know that Parker was at the theater that night."

"I begin to be glad I didn't find it," said Lucinda. "It has only brought trouble to poor Mr. Turner."

Ben shrugged his shoulders.

"Mr. Turner doesn't mean to be poor if he can help it," he rejoined.

Now let us follow Tom.

He knew that it was of no use to go to the store till Mr. Armstrong's return, for the superintendent would refuse to receive him back. He decided to go to Mr. Shapleigh's office, and ask his advice what to do. He was glad to feel that he had a friend on whose judgment he could implicitly rely. So with restored courage he started to

walk down-town—he could not afford to ride—and in due time reached the office of his friend.

Entering, he saw the bookkeeper, who eyed him coldly, for he did not like his employer's interest in Tom.

“Is Mr. Shapleigh in?” asked Tom.

“Can't you see that he isn't?”

“I suppose I may sit down and wait for him,” said Tom, somewhat nettled at the man's rudeness.

“Oh, yes, you can sit down and wait for him,” returned the bookkeeper with a queer smile.

Tom availed himself of the permission, and taking a seat began to read the morning *Herald*.

He had read for some five minutes with comparatively little interest when all at once his heart was filled with excitement as his eyes fell upon the following advertisement.

“ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS REWARD. Lost, in or near Wallack's Theater on the evening of the 17th inst., a valuable diamond, which must have become loosened from its setting and fallen on the floor or in the street. The finder will receive the above reward on returning the stone to HAROLD TREVOR, FIFTH AVENUE HOTEL.”

CHAPTER XXXVII.

MR. HAROLD TREVOR.

"I WILL go to the Fifth Avenue Hotel at once," thought Tom, as he laid down the paper and took his hat.

"Going so soon?" asked the bookkeeper with another queer smile.

"Yes, sir. I will come round later."

"I don't think you need be in a hurry. Mr. Shapleigh is in Chicago."

"Why didn't you tell me before?" said Tom indignantly.

"You didn't ask me. By the way, how do you happen to be away from the store?"

"I will explain that to Mr. Shapleigh."

"I think I understand. They didn't keep you long."

Tom flushed, but he did not deign to answer. Indeed, his mind was full of other thoughts. He left the office, and made his way quickly to a station of the Sixth Avenue Elevated Road, being anxious to see Mr. Trevor as soon as possible.

Twenty minutes later he entered the Fifth Avenue Hotel, and going up to the desk inquired for Mr. Harold Trevor.

"I hope you have his diamond," said the clerk. Tom smiled.

"That is what I want to see him about," he said.

"Will you send up your card?" asked the clerk.

"Yes, sir."

A hall boy was summoned, and Tom wrote his name on one of the hotel cards. In one corner he added, "About the advertisement."

The hall boy returned quickly, and, approaching Tom, said: "Follow me, young man. Mr. Trevor will see you."

Harold Trevor had a room on the third floor. The hall boy preceded Tom, and knocked at the door.

"Come in!" said a pleasant voice.

The door was opened, and Tom found himself in the presence of a young man of medium size, apparently about twenty-five years of age. He had a singularly open and attractive face.

"Are you Mr. Trevor?" asked Tom.

"Yes. Can you tell me anything about my lost diamond?"

"I think I have it with me."

"Let me see it—quick!"

Tom took the stone from his purse and handed it to the young man.

"Yes," he said, "that is the stone I lost. Tell me how and where you found it."

Tom did so in as few words as possible.

"Have you any idea of the value of the stone?" asked Mr. Trevor.

"Some one told me it was probably worth five hundred dollars."

"It is worth a thousand!"

"Such a small stone as that?"

"It is large—for a diamond. But let me tell you that it is worth to me far more than its market value. Shall I tell you why? It was given to me by my mother just as I left home for Oxford—I am an Englishman. When I tell you that my mother is now dead, you will understand why I set so high a value upon it."

"Yes, sir, I understand."

"Now excuse me, but I judge that you are poor; were you not tempted to sell it when you learned its value?"

"Not for an instant, Mr. Trevor. Money got in that way would never have given me any pleasure."

"Nobly spoken. Now tell me about yourself. How are you situated?"

Tom told his story, keeping nothing back. Harold Trevor listened with attention.

"Then it seems you are out of employment," he said.

"Yes, sir."

"Then I have a plan to propose. I have come to America to see the country. I am going to spend the next two months in traveling. Would you like to go with me?"

"But won't it cost a good deal of money?"

"Yes," answered Trevor, smiling, "but I shall foot the bills. You shall be my secretary, and I will pay you ten dollars a week."

"You are very kind, sir, and I accept with pleasure. I am afraid I am not well-dressed enough, however, to be your companion."

"Wait here till I have eaten breakfast, and I will go out and buy whatever you need. By the way, here are the hundred dollars I offered as a reward for the recovery of the diamond."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE WAY OF THE WORLD.

AN hour later Tom came out of Brooks Brothers' clothing store, dressed in a handsome suit of fashionable cut. It certainly improved his appearance, for the suit he took off had been made by a country tailor who was not well up in the modern styles, and was considerably more than half worn.

"You can give your old suit to some poor boy who needs it," said Mr. Trevor, "and I will buy you still another before we leave the city."

Accordingly Tom wrapped up the suit, intending to send it by express to Dan Otis, whose poverty would make it very acceptable.

Not content with the suits, Mr. Trevor handed Tom ten dollars, and commissioned him to purchase underclothing, socks, and handkerchiefs.

"But, sir, I can use a part of the hundred dollars you gave me."

"Better put that in some savings bank, as your salary will supply all you need."

"You are very kind, Mr. Trevor," said Tom earnestly.

"It gives me pleasure to help others, but, having abundant means, that is less to my credit than if I were compelled to deny myself."

Tom found so much to do that he did not reach his boarding house till the middle of the afternoon.

Meanwhile Ben Barrett had gone down-town feeling very angry with Tom because he would not allow him to share in his good fortune. Being somewhat late, he took a horse car, and found himself sitting next to a young man with whom he scraped acquaintance.

"Where do you work?" asked Ben, who had considerable curiosity.

"At Armstrong's, in Greene Street."

"Indeed! A young fellow who boards at the same place with me works there."

"What is his name?"

"Tom Turner."

"Oh, Turner? He got sacked yesterday."

"What!" exclaimed Ben, elated. "Are you sure of that?"

"Yes; Mr. Wallace, the superintendent, sacked him."

"What had he been doing?"

"I don't know. Wallace is pretty arbitrary. I dare say he had not been doing anything to warrant a discharge."

"I don't know about that. Tom is rather cranky. I took him up when he came to the city and showed him about, for he was awfully green, but he has got a big head now, and makes himself very stiff and disagreeable."

"I don't know anything about that. There are so many of us in the store that I am not much acquainted with him. I know Wallace, however. He wouldn't have discharged Turner if the governor had been in the city."

"The governor?"

"Armstrong, I mean. He seems to be rather partial to Turner. Very likely when he returns he will take him back."

"So Tom Turner is bounced!" soliloquized Ben gleefully, when he got out of the car. "Well, that's a good one. Pays him off for his airs and miserliness. I shall have a good laugh at him when I get home."

No sooner had Ben entered the house than he went up to Tom's room and knocked.

"Come in!" said Tom.

As Ben entered the room, he noticed nothing new in Tom's appearance, for the latter had re-

sumed his old clothes, not meaning to send them away till the next day.

"You're home early," remarked Ben demurely.

"Yes ; I haven't been to the store to-day."

"How is that ?"

"The superintendent discharged me."

"You don't say so ? What's the matter ?"

"It is a piece of injustice, that is all. If Mr. Armstrong were in the city he wouldn't have done it."

"Humph ! that's rather serious, isn't it ? Of course you can't get into any other store without a recommendation from Armstrong's. I suppose you'll go back to the country ?"

"Oh, no !"

"But you can't pay your board here without any income."

"I am going to leave."

"I see, and get a cheaper boarding house. I'm really sorry for you, Tom, but at the same time allow me to say that you got a big head too quick. It doesn't do for a boy to be too cranky."

Tom smiled. He saw through Ben's pretended sympathy.

"I agree with you," he said. "I didn't know that my head had grown any, and I wasn't aware that I had become cranky."

“No, I suppose not. People don’t see it themselves. What are you going to do?”

“What would you advise me to do?”

“Sell the diamond, for what you can get. I’ll sell it for you if you wish.”

“Thank you, but I can’t do that.”

“Why not?”

“I’ve found the owner.”

“What! Who is he?” asked Ben in great excitement.

“Harold Trevor, an English gentleman, living at the Fifth Avenue Hotel.”

“How much did he give you?”

“He bought me some new clothes, two suits, and some underclothing.”

Tom did not care to mention the hundred dollars.

“That’s all very well, but it won’t pay your board.”

“He has appointed me his private secretary at ten dollars a week, and board.”

“You don’t say!” exclaimed Ben in mingled surprise and chagrin. “Well, you are in luck.”

“I thought yesterday I was out of luck.”

“Where are you to live?”

“He is to make a Western tour, and I am to go with him. You see I shan’t have occasion to

break my heart or die of disappointment even if Mr. Wallace has discharged me."

"Well, well!" ejaculated Ben enviously, "I don't see why I can't have a little luck too."

"Have you any engagement this evening?"

"No."

"Will you go with me to Wallack's Theater? That's where my luck came from, and I want to visit it."

"Of course I'll go," said Ben brightening up. "You're a good fellow after all, Tom. I misjudged you."

"I am glad you have changed your mind," said Tom good naturedly.

He understood very well that he could place very little reliance on Ben's friendship. He was one of those summer acquaintances whose steadfastness depends on the prosperity of its object. Now that Tom was favored by fortune, Ben was glad to be in his company, though he did feel a touch of envy when Tom descended from his room dressed in one of the new suits he had procured from Brooks Brothers.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

TOM IS REVENGED.

BEFORE he left the city Tom wrote a letter to Mr. Armstrong in which he gave an account of his dismissal by Mr. Wallace. This was his letter :

“MR. ARMSTRONG,

“DEAR SIR :—During your absence I have been discharged without even a day’s notice by the superintendent, Mr. Wallace. I will report the matter to you just as it occurred. On the day of my dismissal I detected a well-dressed lady stealing articles from the silk counter which she put into her pocket. I reported the matter to a floor-walker and he referred it again to Mr. Wallace, who would not believe my statement against the lady’s denial. She would have been allowed to go out without being searched if the detective had not come up and recognized her as a well-known shoplifter. Even then she was allowed to go on payment for the goods.

"She was very angry with me, and claimed that I had been in her employ, and been discharged for dishonesty. This is absurd, and you have only to refer the matter to Mr. Shapleigh, who will contradict it. Yet on this charge I was summarily dismissed by Mr. Wallace without any investigation. I shall be glad if you will question the detective who knows all about it.

"Fortunately I shall not suffer, as I have been lucky enough to be engaged at a salary of ten dollars a week to travel with a young English gentleman. I start for the West to-morrow, but before I go I wish you to understand why I have been dismissed from the store.

"Yours respectfully,

"THOMAS TURNER."

Mr. Armstrong read this letter with a frowning brow. He sent for the detective, who corroborated Tom's statements.

"Please send Mr. Wallace to me," was the comment.

When the superintendent entered the office he saw by his employer's countenance that a storm was impending. For the first time he began to think that he had acted unwisely.

"Mr. Wallace," said Mr. Armstrong, "I un-

derstand that during my absence you took it upon yourself to discharge Thomas Turner."

"Yes, sir."

"Name your reason."

"I was informed by a lady customer that he had been in her employ, and had been discharged for dishonesty."

"Did you investigate the matter before taking action?"

"N—no," stammered the superintendent.

"Who was the lady that preferred the charge? Were you acquainted with her?"

"No, sir."

"Had you any special reason to believe her?"

"She seemed to recognize the boy."

"Now, Mr. Green," said the merchant turning to the detective, "perhaps you can tell who this lady is."

"Yes, sir; she's a notorious shoplifter."

"Did Mr. Wallace know this fact with regard to her?"

"Yes, sir; I told him."

"Why should she bring such a charge against the boy, if false?"

"Because he had detected her in shoplifting."

"Did Mr. Wallace know this also?"

"Yes, sir. He was about to let her go, but I

put my hand into her pocket and drew out the stolen articles."

"In presence of Mr. Wallace?"

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Armstrong's frown deepened.

"In my opinion," he said, "an outrageous injustice has been done to this boy—an injustice which I will not tolerate."

"I hope you will take Tom back again, sir," said the detective.

"I cannot at present, for he has obtained a position at ten dollars a week, and is now at the West."

"I am heartily glad to hear it, sir," said the detective.

Mr. Wallace looked very much surprised, but made no remark.

"What boy have you got in Turner's place, Mr. Wallace?" inquired the merchant.

"A boy named Wallace."

"Is he related to you?"

"He is my son," answered the superintendent nervously.

"Aha! This throws light upon your summary dismissal of Thomas Turner. You may notify this boy that he is to leave the store at the end of

the week. If a boy is needed, I will engage some one not related to you."

The superintendent turned livid with anger and mortification.

"I hope, sir, you won't insist upon this," he said hoarsely. "The boy is not to blame."

"Neither was Tom Turner. He must go," answered Armstrong firmly.

"Very well, sir."

"And for yourself, I will not remove you from your position at once, but will reduce your salary to the amount which you received before the last advance. That will do, sir."

As this cut the superintendent down two hundred dollars a year he went back to his desk lamenting his folly in bringing upon himself so severe a punishment. It was an additional aggravation that the boy whom he had tried to injure was now much better off than before, and all in consequence of his dismissal.

CHAPTER XL.

HOW TOM PROSPERED.

I DO not propose to speak in detail of Tom's wanderings with his English friend, Harold Trevor. He never for a moment regretted the engagement. Mr. Trevor was a man of ample fortune—he told Tom one day that he had an income of three thousand pounds a year—and was very liberal. He not only paid Tom the stipulated salary—ten dollars a week—but at the end of three months gave him besides a present of fifty dollars. As Tom had left with his mother the hundred dollars paid him as a reward for finding the diamond he did not think it necessary to send any of this home, but kept it by him.

He found himself one day in a growing town in Montana. Mr. Trevor made a considerable stay in this place, having decided to purchase a plot of land, which, from its situation, was likely to grow more rapidly in value.

"I can't get more than three per cent for my money at home," he said to Tom, "and here I can perhaps double it in six months. Have you got any money laid aside?"

"Yes, sir. I have a hundred and fifty."

"If you see any good chance of investing it I advise you to do it."

"If you recommend it, sir, I will, but is it not too small a sum for investment?"

"Perhaps so, but if you see a good chance let me know, and I will lend you a moderate sum of money at the same interest I would get in England."

"Thank you, sir."

The same evening Tom was sitting in the public room of the hotel, Mr. Trevor having gone out on a drive, when he heard two men chatting at a table close by.

"Watkins," said one, "I wish you'd buy my place."

"Why do you wish to sell?"

"I want to get back to the East. I have an old mother in Albany who is very near her end, and I want to see her once more."

"Will you sell it on time?"

"No, I want cash. You see I want to use the money for traveling expenses."

"Won't you come back here ? "

"No ; if I return this way I shall push on to Southern California."

"It's a pity you couldn't keep the property. It will be worth twice as much a year from now."

"And more. I understand all that, and I wouldn't sacrifice it if I hadn't a strong motive."

"What do you want for the place ? "

"I ought to get a thousand dollars."

"I'll give it to you if you'll accept two notes of four and eight months."

"It won't do. I must have cash."

"Then I must give it up."

The speaker rose and left the hotel. Tom, who had listened with interest, rose and seated himself beside the landowner.

"Would you mind showing me your place ? " he said.

"Why, certainly I will," answered Stevens briskly. "Are you looking for an investment ? "

"Yes, sir."

"You are very young for an investor."

"Yes, sir, but I have a wealthy friend who will back me. Indeed, he has recommended me to buy some property here."

"Come with me now. I can tell you, my

young friend, you won't make any mistake in buying my property."

"How much land have you?"

"About ten lots on the principal street. There is a two-story cabin, but that is not of much account. That won't rise in value, but the land will. Nothing would lead me to sell but my wish to see my old mother before she dies."

"Couldn't you mortgage it?"

"No, or at least it would not be worth while, for I am not coming back here."

They left the hotel, and walked a short distance to Mr. Stevens's property. It comprised a plot three hundred feet front by two hundred feet deep. It was most eligibly located, and directly in the path of improvement.

"How do you like it?" asked the owner.

"I think favorably of it," answered Tom cautiously. "What are your terms?"

"Eight hundred dollars cash."

"Will you give me till to-morrow morning to decide?"

"Yes."

"I must see my backer to find out if he will lend me the necessary money."

"All right. I will give you the refusal of it till twelve o'clock to-morrow."

When Mr. Trevor returned from his ride, Tom laid the matter before him, and Trevor went out with him to see the property.

"It's a bargain, Tom," he said. "I advise you to buy."

"The man wants cash."

"How much can you furnish ?"

"A hundred and fifty dollars."

"I will lend you the balance, and I am sure you will double your money in a short time."

Before twelve o'clock the next day Tom found himself the legal owner of the Stevens estate. It gave him an odd sensation to feel that he was a real estate owner, but he was assured by his landlord that he had made a bargain.

"I will give you a thousand dollars cash for it myself," he said. "I wish Stevens had come to me."

"Thank you, sir, but I prefer to wait."

The next day Tom and his English friend started on a trip to Washington Territory, now a State.

On his return six weeks later he was waited on by a New York man, who represented a syndicate.

"Are you the owner of the Stevens property ?"

he asked, surprised at Tom's youthful appearance.

"Yes, sir."

"Do you want to sell?"

"If you will make it worth my while," answered Tom shrewdly. He had learned that during his brief absence property had jumped up considerably. Profitable mines had been discovered only a few miles distant, and there was a tremendous boom in real estate values. Inquiry developed the fact that there was a project to build a large and handsome hotel on the land owned by Tom.

Our hero managed the negotiations very cleverly, and finally secured an offer of five thousand dollars for two thirds of the property, half cash, and half in a year's time at ten per cent interest. He reported the offer to Mr. Trevor, who advised acceptance.

"I congratulate you heartily, Tom," said his employer. "You will be a rich man some time."

"I feel rich now, Mr. Trevor. I have a third of the land left, and after repaying you the loan I shall be worth over four thousand dollars besides."

"It is a brilliant speculation. You have been

shrewd, but you have also been favored by fortune. Don't be in a hurry to sell the balance of the land. It will keep on increasing in value."

The Western trip was prolonged quite beyond expectation, and it was nearly a year since Brinton Pendergast's death when Tom arrived in New York. He had sent his mother occasional remittances, but he had not told her of his brilliant land speculation.

CHAPTER XLI.

AN UNEXPECTED DEMAND.

ON the very day that Tom started for the East, Mrs. Turner was considerably surprised to receive a call from Hannibal Carter.

As Hannibal entered he looked about him inquiringly. He had heard nothing of Tom's leaving Mr. Armstrong's store, and supposed he was still in New York.

"All alone, widow?" he said.

"Yes, Mr. Carter, and I feel very lonely without Tom, I assure you."

"How does he get along in New York?"

"He isn't in New York."

Hannibal opened his eyes in surprise.

"I thought he was in a large store there."

"So he was, but he left some months since."

"Ahem! so he didn't suit."

"The superintendent took a dislike to him, and discharged him in the absence of Mr. Armstrong."

"Too bad, too bad!" said Hannibal cheerfully, for he did not like Tom, and was not sorry to hear of his misfortune. "It sort of spoiled his prospects, didn't it?"

"No; he got another position immediately."

"You don't say! But I thought you said he wasn't in New York."

"He is not. He is traveling with an English gentleman. The last letter he wrote came from Montana."

"A sort of valet, I reckon."

"I don't know, but I am sure he is not looked upon as a servant."

"Does he get good pay?"

"Tom has never told me just what he gets, but he sends me money from time to time, so that I am not straitened."

"I am glad to hear that, really I am."

"You are kind to take such an interest in me."

"Well, ahem," returned Mr. Carter, looking a trifle embarrassed, "it seems natural that I should feel interested, seein' you are near related but there's another reason."

"What is it?" inquired Mrs. Turner, puzzled.

"In lookin' over my papers the other day I came across a note given me by your husband for two hundred dollars. It has never been paid,

and the interest makes it amount to nearly three hundred."

"A note of my husband's? Let me see it."

Mr. Carter produced a note dated seven years back. The signature seemed correct, and it looked genuine.

"I don't understand this," said the widow. "Was not the note paid? I remember Mr. Turner referring to it, and telling me that he had paid the note."

"Quite a mistake, Cousin Helen. It was never paid; otherwise how should I have the note?"

"How does it happen that you never presented it before?" asked Mrs. Turner suspiciously.

"Well, it got mislaid. I was huntin' over my desk the other day among some old papers when I found it."

"There's some mistake about it, I feel sure. I am confident that the note was paid."

"There ain't no evidence of it, Cousin Helen, and in a court of law you would be held for it."

"What do you expect me to do about it, Mr. Carter? Supposing it to be good, I have no means of meeting it."

"You forget, Cousin Helen; there's that hundred dollars you are to receive from Uncle

Brinton's estate. The time is nearly up now. I propose that you turn it over to me, and give me a mortgage on your place here for the balance. I'll call the whole note—interest and all—two hundred and fifty dollars. I want to be as easy as I can."

"Cousin Hannibal, do you know what you ask? You want to take from me my legacy, and to mortgage the house besides?"

"Justice is justice!" returned Hannibal, coughing. "It's right that debts should be paid."

"I don't feel satisfied about the money being due. I must have time to reflect."

"I'll give you a week to consider—two weeks, in fact—for the year will be up before that time, and you'll get the money from Uncle Brinton's estate. I want to be as easy with you as I can."

At this point there was a knock at the door, and Dan Otis entered.

"Mrs. Turner," he said, "here's a letter for you which the postmaster gave me. I guess it's from Tom."

Mrs. Turner opened it eagerly, and read it with joy.

"Tom will be home in less than a week," she said, lifting her eyes. "I will lay the matter before him, and then I will answer you."

“Seems to me you can answer for yourself.
A boy’s opinion ain’t worth much.”

“At any rate I shall be guided by what Tom
says.”

CHAPTER XLII.

CONCLUSION.

FIVE days afterwards Tom arrived in Hillsboro. It was a very joyful meeting between him and his mother.

“How you have grown!” said she admiringly, “and you look so well, too. Did you enjoy traveling?”

“Very much, mother.”

“I have some good news for you too, Tom. When I heard that you were on your way home, I wrote to Mr. Armstrong and asked him if he would take you back. Here is his letter. He says he will make a place for you, and give you a dollar a week more than he paid you before.”

Tom laughed.

“He is very kind, and I am almost tempted to go back to see Mr. Wallace stare, but I may be able to do better.”

“Don’t refuse a good offer, Tom. Seven dollars a week is a good deal of money.”

“I’ll think of it, mother. Is that all your news ? ”

“No, Tom,” replied his mother soberly. “I’ve got some bad news also.”

“What is it ? ”

“Hannibal Carter came here a week since, and presented a note for two hundred dollars signed by your father, which, with several years’ interest, amounts to nearly three hundred dollars.”

“What an old rascal he is ! ”

“Not if the note is genuine. He is a very selfish man, I admit.”

“What did he propose ? ”

“That I should turn over to him Uncle Brinton’s legacy of a hundred dollars, and give him a mortgage on the place for the balance.”

“When will he call here again ? ”

“In about a week from this time.”

“I shall be ready for him.”

“You won’t be too violent, Tom ? ” said his mother anxiously. “We can’t afford to offend him.”

“You can trust me, mother.”

The next day was the anniversary of Mr. Pendergast’s death. Tom waited upon the executor, and received from him the legacy of a hundred dollars for his mother.

From Mr. Benson's office he went over to the office of the other lawyer, Judge Scott, and presented his uncle's letter, found in the old trunk.

"I am puzzled to know what this means," he said, "but in accordance with my uncle's letter I come to you on the anniversary of his death to have it investigated."

"I shall have great pleasure in explaining, Tom," said the judge, smiling. "I believe you and the other heirs were surprised that your uncle left so small an estate."

"Yes, sir. Mr. Carter in particular was very much exercised about it."

"I can explain in a few words. Your uncle left ten thousand dollars in bonds which were not mentioned in his will."

Tom looked amazed.

"But where are they?" he asked.

"In my possession. They were left in my hands, with directions to give them to a particular person, if the said person was of good reputation, and had formed no bad habits."

"And who is this person, Judge Scott?" asked Tom, not suspecting the truth.

"Thomas Turner of Hillsboro."

"Can this be true?" ejaculated Tom in mingled surprise and joy.

"There is no doubt of it. I have Brinton Pendergast's written instructions. When do you want the bonds?"

"I shall be glad if you will take charge of them, as my guardian, till I am of age."

"Thank you for your confidence, Tom. I will have the necessary papers drawn and assume the charge as desired. By the way, I ought to mention that I have collected some six hundred dollars interest, which you may like to take with you."

"Thank you, sir. I will do so, as I want to make some improvements about the house and buy some new furniture. But I must tell you that I have been very fortunate in the West. I have made over four thousand dollars by a land investment, and expect to receive as much more for a lot I still own."

"Really, Tom, I am amazed. You were certainly born under a lucky star. Tell me all about it."

When Tom returned home and told his mother of his unexpected legacy she was overjoyed.

"Now," she said, "we shall be able to meet the note held by Cousin Hannibal."

Tom smiled.

"Leave me to settle that," he said.

Punctually to the time agreed upon Hannibal Carter presented himself at the cottage. He was rather surprised to find two carpenters at work upon it.

"What does this mean?" he asked abruptly.

"I am going to improve the house a little," answered Tom.

"Oh, you are!" said Hannibal, his eyes snapping. "How much do you calc'late to spend in doin' it?"

"Two or three hundred dollars."

"And where's the money to come from?"

"I have brought back some money from the West. Besides, there is mother's legacy."

"If you've got so much money I'll trouble you to pay your father's note. With interest it amounts to two hundred and ninety-four dollars."

"Let me see that note, Mr. Carter."

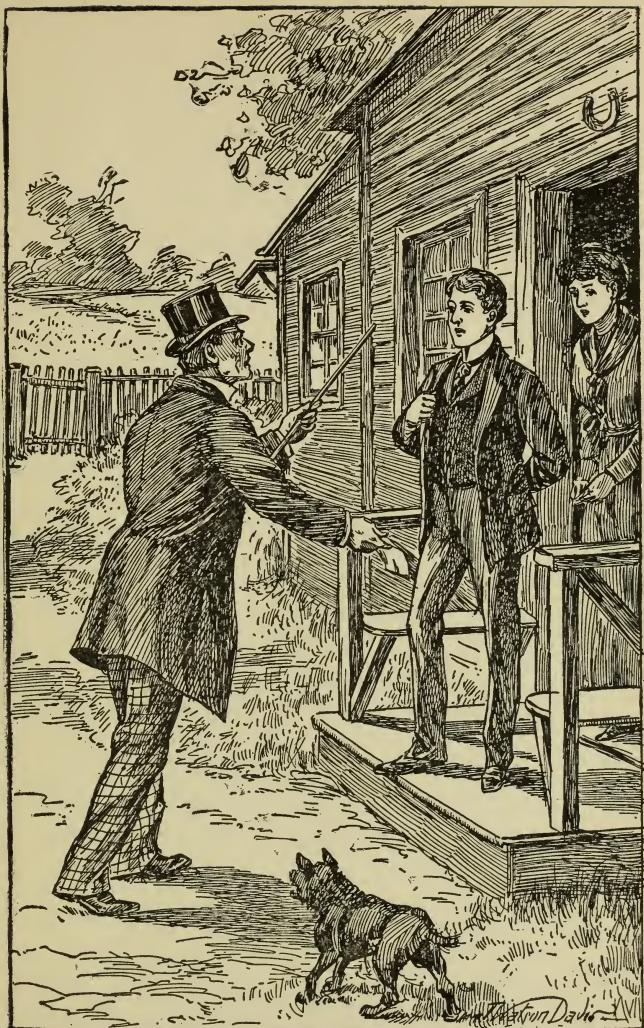
"You can look at it in my hands. I won't part with it."

"I don't propose to pay it," said Tom.

"You don't, hey? We'll see about that. So you're willin' your father's memory should be disgraced."

"My father paid that note, and I don't intend to pay it again."

Hannibal turned pale.



"If you've got so much money I'll trouble you to pay your father's note,"
said Mr. Carter.—Page 314.

Tom Turner's Legacy.

“Do you know what you’re sayin’?” he ejaculated.

“Yes, I have my father’s papers. Among them is a receipt from you in which it is mentioned that the original note being lost or mislaid, you accept the money paid, and relinquish all claim upon it. Would you like to see the receipt? If so, I refer you to my lawyer, Judge Scott, who will show it to you.”

Hannibal Carter turned all colors. His scheme had miscarried, and he felt that he would be recognized as a would-be swindler. He muttered that there must be some mistake, but did not take the trouble of calling on Judge Scott. As he was leaving the house, he met to his disgust, the tramp already referred to, who hailed him familiarly with—“Have you come after that trunk, squire?”

Hannibal eyed him angrily.

“I don’t care to speak to a tramp,” he said.

“That is your mistake, squire. I’ve got a good situation as a drummer for a New York firm, and never call at houses now when people are away. How is it with you?”

Hannibal did not deign to answer. When he heard a little later that Tom had inherited the missing bonds, he was highly exasperated, and

thought of bringing suit to obtain a share of them, but a brief talk with Judge Scott led him to think better of his first intention. He is still well to do, but feels deeply wronged by the disposition of Uncle Brinton's property.

Tom is now established in a business of his own in New York, and promises to become a rich man, while yet young. He is on very friendly terms with Mr. Armstrong, and politely recognizes his old enemy, the superintendent, when he visits the store ; but he has not forgotten the summary discharge he received at his hands.

Clarence Kent has changed for the better, and is now an intimate friend of Tom's. Dan Otis is in his employ as a light porter, and is well paid for his services. Ben Barrett is constantly changing his position, and from time to time has occasion to ask a loan from Tom which he never repays, but Tom has a kindly feeling for his old friends, and does not mind the loss. The old trunk is still carefully kept, in remembrance of the uncle to whom its present owner is so much indebted.

THE END.

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